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THE WOODEN SPOON;

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NICK HARDY AT COLLEGE.

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PARK LUDLOW, A. M. [pseud.]

[Brown, Theron]

CENTRAL II

"Revolt is recreant when pursuit is brave;
Never to faint doth purchase what we crave."

BOSTON:
HENRY A. YOUNG & CO.

1877.

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TO

CHARLES TAYLOR CATLIN,

MY CLASSMATE

AND MOST INTIMATE COLLEGE FRIEND,

IN MEMORY OF

... "the reverend halls
Where once of old we wore the gown,"

AND OF THE THOUSAND LONG PAST BUT STILL DEARLY
CHERISHED JOYS OF OUR STUDENT LIFE
TOGETHER,

I Dedicate this Little Romance,

WHOSE SCENES AND CHARACTERS WILL RECALL TO HIM,
AS TO ME, THE OTHER FRIENDS WHO
MADE US GLAD.

P. L., A. M.



P R E F A C E .



CIRCUMSTANCES may idealize the homeliest common thing, and a mere utensil *with a history* is no longer a dumb piece of service, but a token. Let this apologize for the wooden whim which names my college-tale. The concern of my hero in the mystery of the broken spoon is less a concern of inheritance than of a coincidence of fortunes; for both the young heir and his old heirloom are instruments of restoration. The latter brings ancestral values, the former ancestral virtues back to light.

If, in the events and experiences here told, my readers trace an example of a genial and helpful soul who in his own rising raises others, who lives to gather and not to scatter friends,

who gives as much and as gladly as he receives, and who makes goodness rather than greatness the load-star of his pursuit, perhaps they will not blame the simple device by which I have tried to weave some threads of romance through the sequel-story of Nicholas Hardy's student career.

P. L., A. M.

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THE WOODEN SPOON;

OR,

NICK HARDY IN COLLEGE.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH COOLNESS WINS.

His cares must still be double to his joys
In any dignity ; where, if he err,
He finds no pardon; and for doing well,
At most small praise, and that wrung out by force.

BEN JONSON.

YOU'VE *lied* to me, sir!" cried the excited Mr. Nugent, pounding the table with the soft side of his fist.

"I do not recognize your right, sir, nor the right of any other man, to talk to me in that way," said young Mr. Hardy.

“It is my right, as a trustee of this institution, to call you to an account, sir. You told me last summer that my boy Pomeroy was one of your best scholars, and gave you no trouble,” persisted Mr. Nugent, angrily.

“Well, sir, do you claim that I told a falsehood when I said *that* about your boy?” quoth Hardy, looking the man coolly in the eye.

“I want to know what business you have to send me these complaints about him now!” cried Mr. Nugent, growing furious.

“I send them because it becomes my duty to do so, sir,” said Hardy.

“Then why didn’t you let me know before?” demanded Mr. Nugent.

“I informed you as soon as I thought occasion required it. Last year I said that Pomeroy was a good boy, and it was true;

now I say that he is a bad boy, and this is true too," replied Hardy.

"It is *not*. You don't make me believe there's all this difference. The difference is in yourself," said Mr. Nugent.

"Perhaps it is. But, begging your pardon, you're the only man who thinks so. This morning I said it was a fine day, and now I say it rains. The difference is all in me, perhaps," said Hardy.

"I know what I'm talking about, sir. You've taken a dislike to my boy, and — you'll find it a dear quarrel, Mr. Nicholas Hardy," quoth Mr. Nugent.

"I expect that a person who is ungentlemanly enough to accuse me of lying will be foolish enough to try to scare me with threats," said Hardy.

"You forget who you're speaking to, sir," cried Mr. Nugent.

"I do not forget *who I am*," retorted

Hardy, "and I respect myself too much to swerve from my duty as master of a school, out of deference to any one's anger or unreasonableness. I know what the ordinary rules of school discipline are, and have tried to enforce them. I have taken pains to acquaint myself with the laws of the state and the laws of the town in regard to truants. The recent violation of these rules and laws by your son I have reported to you duly and *correctly*. You have my testimony to what the boy was, and to what he *is*. What has caused the change in him I do not know, and it is no part of my duty to find out. I have stated the facts, and only the facts,—and you are the first person, sir, who has ever insulted me by questioning my truthfulness."

"I shall take my boy away from *your* tuition at once, sir. And I warn you that your days as teacher in this place are num-

bered, Mr. Nicholas Hardy," quoth Mr. Nugent, shaking his finger at the object of his wrath, and turning on his heel.

"In one month's time I shall cease to be the principal of this school, according to agreement, and not from any agency of yours, Mr. Nugent," said Nicholas Hardy. But the irate trustee pretended not to hear him, and marched straight out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

The above rather uncomfortable interview took place in the upper hall of the Hightown Grammar School, one day shortly after the scholars had been dismissed. It was our hero's first really harsh experience in all his ten or eleven months' tutorship; and, as he was wont to say afterwards, it "jounced" him considerably after his "long smooth ride." But he had been used to jounces, and expected to get a good many more if

he lived. He had taught the Hightown school with uninterrupted success, and maintained the pleasantest relations with all the members of the board, who employed him, as well as with the parents of his scholars. Of course he had found many things, greater or less, to try his patience, but nothing like this sudden and ferocious attack by Mr. Nugent. That he kept his temper so well under it was a wonder to himself, and a just cause for thankfulness, certainly.

Pomeroy Nugent, or "Pum," as the boys always shortened it, was a smart, intelligent youth, quick to learn, and uncommonly fluent in his recitations, — qualities which invariably gratify and attract a teacher; and Hardy, on first acquaintance, if he could ever have allowed himself at all to have "favorites" among his pupils, would have selected "Pum" as one of them.

Of late, however, the boy had grown

unsteady, and showed a propensity to "hook Jack." This was of more consequence to his teacher, and to the school, from the fact that his influence and example were enticing other boys away from their studies. The recent possession of a new gun, and the general effect of too great parental indulgence at home, no doubt chiefly accounted for Pomeroy's misconduct. But if he had been honest enough to own his loss of interest in his books, and quit school entirely instead of injuring others by his own neglect, this would have ended the matter. The young preceptor remonstrated kindly with him, but with no result save to obtain promises which were never kept. When he chided him, the youngster became impatient and even impertinent. Inquiries were sent to his parents, but apparently no notice was taken of them. Finally, a warning that the boy's case must be referred to the truant-

officer, unless his habits were corrected, roused the father, and brought him down to the schoolhouse in great wrath, as we have seen.

Nicholas was right when he said that Mr. Nugent was the only man who could not see that Pomeroy had changed for the worse, and who blamed him for thinking so. The facts were well known in all the neighborhood, and there was scarcely a person who did not censure the truant's course, and regret that his father indulged him in it. The preceptor was sure of his ground. He would have dealt the same with another boy for the same offence, and he knew no reason why he should make an exception in favor of a trustee's son.

The next morning, when Nicholas went to the schoolhouse at the usual hour, he could not get in. Inadvertently he had left his

own key in the door the previous evening. Some madcaps had secured it, without the janitor's knowledge, and in a spirit of mischief "locked the master out." It was provoking to Nicholas that at this particular time his own forgetfulness should have laid the temptation for such a prank; for just now (considering what occurred yesterday) the affair had an ugly look.

"The hand of Pum Nugent is in this thing," Nicholas thought to himself. But he did not stop to reason long. Two or three boys and half a dozen girls stood at the head of the stairs and about the door, waiting and wondering. "There's some one in there," they said. That was evident. The key was in the key-hole on the inside.

"Open this door," said Nicholas in a voice of authority. No answer. "Open this door!" There was a slight movement within, he thought. He put his ear quickly down to

the key-hole and caught some words, in a feigned tone. "Treat first," — that was what it sounded like. Aha! so the rogues were up to a bit of rebellion. Nicholas knew what he would do. The janitor was away. He generally finished his work and left the building about the time the master came in. But Nicholas had duplicates of all his keys. The only one not in his pocket was the one inside the schoolroom door. He told the scholars who stood near him to "run down and hunt up the janitor," naming several places where they might look for him. The moment they disappeared down the stairs he stepped quietly to a small door at the end of the passage, unlocked it, and let himself into the attic.

Meantime the young rogues in the schoolroom, most of whom already began to feel frightened at their own audacious joke, were destined to a greater fright. All at once,

while they stood huddled together, discussing the situation in whispers, and arguing with their ringleader, whether to open the door or scramble out of the back windows, they heard a bit of a noise overhead, and down into their very midst dropped the preceptor, through the scuttle-hole!

It was like a lion leaping among a parcel of sheep. And certainly it would be impossible to picture the "sheepish" consternation on the faces of those boys. Instinctively they scudded to their seats, and sat there trembling. There were only four of them, besides Pum Nugent; for he was the king scamp in the mischief, just as Nicholas had supposed. No one else in the school had any motive to contrive so saucy a caper as locking the door against him. But they were all "in the same boat" now; and never a more scared and sorry set of culprits shivered in the presence of power.

The master had suddenly outflanked them, and now, to be sure, there would be summary vengeance.

But the master seemed to be in no hurry for vengeance. He uttered not a word till he had hung up his hat, opened his desk, taken out his books, and coolly seated himself in his chair. Then he said in a calm tone, "Pomeroy, unlock the door."

Pomeroy obeyed very promptly indeed; and Nicholas fully expected that he would dodge out, and be seen no more; but in this he was mistaken.

The boys could not think what to make of the preceptor's strange quietness. The wonder and vague dread provoked by it quite filled up the measure of their confusion. If he had collared them as soon as he appeared among them, and laid about vigorously with ruler or rod, they would have taken the punishment with a good grace.

But his silence was something more terrible. Beyond a glance or two, and the single order to Pomeroy, he had hardly seemed to notice them. They might have guessed that in that "glance or two" he was conning the list of their names, and measuring to himself each one's share in the morning's mischief—John Grannis, Abel Bunce, Newton Taylor, Fred Hawkins, with ringleader Pum, of course, at the head. They could not have guessed that every other minute he was trying to suppress a smile. He knew exactly how the boys felt, and there was something so droll in the fix he had brought them to, and in the hang-dog look they wore, that he had to keep his eyes off them to avoid laughing.

Presently he looked at his watch, and said, "John Grannis, ring the bell."

By this time most of the pupils had arrived, and found out what had happened;

and the flushed and curious faces turned on the preceptor, and the lively chatter in the entry below, told how the story of the lock-out, and the capture of the five boys, had excited them all.

Mr. Nicholas Hardy was the only calm person in the room. He opened the school and went on with it in the usual way. But few of the scholars could fasten their minds on their lessons long at a time. Every one was wondering what the master meant to do. They knew (some of them to their cost) how prompt and firm he had always been in maintaining discipline, and how quickly and effectually he had always dealt with every smallest defiance of his authority. Surely there was a rod in pickle for those five offenders who locked the door. As for the five boys themselves, they suffered accumulating agonies. Four of them, at least, were completely crushed with shame, chagrin,

and blue forebodings. That state of feeling was Nicholas' advantage, and he intended to keep it. That was what "the master meant to do." He had made up his mind how the matter stood with those four, and what course of treatment with all would have the best effect on the fifth.

During the forenoon a small piece of white paper slid very secretly from hand to hand, and finally found its way to the preceptor's desk. There were these few lines of writing on it:

"MR. HARDY: We are sorry we did what we did this morning. Pomeroy said let's lock the master out, and we said we would for a joke. It was a wrong thing, and we hope you will excuse us.

JOHN GRANNIS. NEWTON TAYLOR.

ABEL BUNCE. FRED HAWKINS."

It was no surprise to Nicholas to receive this note. But it was a surprise to him

that Pomeroy Nugent (notwithstanding what his father had said) was in his place at school, not only in the forenoon but all the afternoon, and, though evidently very ill at ease, behaved and recited his lessons most unexceptionably. Before the day ended he had partly surmised the true reason; and before he left the schoolhouse his surmises were turned to certainty. When the school was closed he signified to Pomeroy and the other four boys that they would remain after the rest of the pupils went away. After seeing that all inquisitive ears were out of the building, he was about to sit down with his five young offenders for a good talk, when a heavy tread up the stairs and a knock on the door announced the advent of Dr. Pliny Norcross, another member of the board of trustees. Bidding the boys retire into the small recitation-room, he politely welcomed the gentleman, and seated him in

his chair. Then telling him he would be with him in a moment, he immediately rejoined his pupils.

Addressing first the four who sent him the note, he said, "These boys have apologized to me for the part they took in the affair of this morning. They will never hear more of it from me if they never repeat such an absurd and lawless piece of mischief. You may go."

"Well, Pomeroy," he resumed pleasantly, after they had left the room, "you are going to attend school every day now—are you not?—going to study with us right along, to the end—without any more offs or breaks?"

"Yes, sir," said Pomeroy; and for some reason, though still a little to his surprise, Nicholas believed the boy.

"And now, my lad," he continued, laying his hand on his shoulder, "will you tell me

what you were thinking about when you locked that door?"

Pomeroy hung his head and twisted one of his jacket-buttons. "I wasn't thinking much of anything; I s'pose 'twas because I was kind of mad."

"Are you mad now?"

"No, sir," replied Pomeroy, with considerable feeling.

"Honestly, didn't that fun cost more than it came to?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you don't put your hand to such a scrape again?"

"No, sir."

"Very well, then," said Nicholas, smiling; "if I see you here constantly till term closes, I shall know you are true and square again. I have been hunting for the *man* in you, and I think I'll find him. Good-by till tomorrow."

And the boy tripped out as if he had left a big load behind him.

Dr. Pliny Norcross was a physician retired from a prosperous practice, — a man of books and many curious researches — eccentric, moreover, and taciturn, and never caring a fig for the goings-on of the world, unless something extraordinary called him out. Something extraordinary HAD called him out.

When Nicholas got through with his boys, and came back from the recitation-room, the doctor greeted him with an explosion of laughter. He laughed so loud and so long that the young preceptor began to feel a little embarrassed, not quite knowing how to take it.

“Well, well, friend Hardy,” quoth the merry doctor at last. “Ha, ha, ha! a man with Seth Nugent and Pum Nugent on his hands both at once has got enough — ha, ha, ha! So you received notice last night that

your days were numbered, and this morning had the key turned on you! Ha, ha, ha!—that's too good."

And then Nicholas managed to learn, between the gusts of laughter, how Mr. Nugent's interview with him had leaked out (thanks to the janitor), and the other trustees had put their heads together about it, and had been to see the angry man, and softened him down, till he was ashamed and "drew in his horns," and admitted that the master was right, and undertook to look after his son; and how the story of the master's shrewd trapping of the boys that morning, and of his pluck and coolness, was in everybody's mouth, and people everywhere were calling him a hero, and a "trump," and "a perfect brick," and all the other good-fellow things. "And I tell you what, Hardy," concluded the doctor, with a vehement rap on the desk, "you have yourself to thank

for it. We had set you right after Nugent came down on you so, and if you'd been imprudent to-day, when the boys provoked you, you'd have spoiled it all!"

The doctor was thoroughly interested,—excited, in fact,—and it had taken him a good while to get through talking and laughing about the events of the last twenty-four hours.

Walking home with Nicholas, he fell back on his old themes. "By the way," he said, "did you know that the original and correct spelling of your name was Hardee — with a double E?"

Nicholas had never happened to know that. He supposed it was because he had given more time to the Hardy spirit than to the Hardy letters.

"Well, well," quoth the doctor bluntly, but shaking his sides a little; "the name is a good one, and has been borne by better

men than you or me — which is saying a great deal. You are going to college, but you'll never be a 'senior wrangler,' for you were not born with a gold spoon in your mouth; nor were any of your ancestors, I think, for I know the line, though it isn't in Burke's British Peerage. As they say in England," (the doctor rambled on,) "'a Senior Wrangler is born with a gold spoon in his mouth, a Senior Optime with a silver spoon, and a Junior Optime with a wooden spoon,' — which may be the most valuable, after all; at any rate, there was a wooden spoon in your family once that was worth more than five hundred gold spoons. I've heard my grandfather tell the story of Captain Solomon Hardee, who used to sail a merchantman to the East Indies in the time of Queen Anne, and who fell in with pirates and lost all he had except a fine diamond that he hid in his ear, — and how, when he was alone

in prison, he carved that wonderful wooden spoon (for he had nothing but his fingers to feed himself with), and finally concealed the diamond in the handle of the spoon so ingeniously that nobody could tell where it was cut and joined; and he kept that spoon with the diamond in it till he died, and never told the secret to any one but his granddaughter; and that was how it ever got out, I suppose, being trusted to a woman. Several of Solomon's descendants came to America, but the granddaughter, who married a McGraw, must have brought the spoon. There used to be some McGraws in New Harbor, and I have always thought that when I had leisure I would like to --"

Just here Nicholas reached his boarding-place, and the doctor promised to tell him more some other time. But Nicholas never called on him for any more.

It is needless to say that neither Pum

Nugent nor his father gave our young preceptor any further trouble. He finished his last term with the praise and hearty friendship of parents and pupils, and was sincerely regretted when he went away. So what was said in the last chapter of "Nick Hardy; or, Once in Fun, Twice in Earnest," was entirely true. The year he spent in Hightown was really "one of the pleasantest years of his life."

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH NICK IS EXAMINED, AND "PLEDGED."

The sun looked golden on the ivied walls,
And jovial greetings shook the brown old halls,
Where high-throned Learning oped her awful stores,
And apprehensive Freshmen thronged the doors.—ANON.

NICHOLAS HARDY visited New York (for the first time in his life) during the summer after his labors closed at Hightown. He thought it would be a good thing, before entering the scholastic lists with other young Yankees again, to see for once the big city of his nation, and "get his bearings," so to speak, from the hub. Besides, he needed certain supplements to his college outfit which could be purchased in New York

to better advantage than anywhere else. At the depot, when about to leave the metropolis for the scene of his first great examination, he noticed quite a number of striplings with carpet-bags, who looked, he said, "exactly as he felt," and who, he could not doubt, were, like himself, young gentlemen intending to enter college. Of course our friend Nick sympathized with them at once. There were four or five other sharp, inquisitive-looking youngsters *without* carpet-bags, but with great heavy canes in their hands, whose character and purpose Nick at first felt rather uncertain about. They seemed to belong together — at least a stranger would have inferred that "*some* of them did" — but they made themselves promiscuous all around, and were especially polite to the (supposed) "young gentlemen intending to enter college."

All these noticeable persons — the young-

sters with carpet-bags and the youngsters without carpet-bags — boarded the train before, or as soon as, the signal sounded.

Hardy's seat-mate was a small-sized, pale, beardless fellow, with very light hair, and wearing prim, steel-bowed glasses on his nose. From the fact that he had a carpet-bag, and from other nameless indications, Hardy set him down as one of the crowd of prospective Freshmen as a matter of course. At first he did not promise to be very sociable, but an initial question, and a succession of short, suggestive remarks by our hero, drew him out, and after that he talked a good deal.

“Going to New Harbor?”

Naturally enough that was the query to begin with. And the beardless young man with very light hair and steel-bowed glasses answered, “Yes.”

As the conversation proceeded, Hardy

found his companion rather dignified and cautious, but what he did say about college life showed a knowledge that astonished him. How could a green, unfledged candidate ever have found out so much? Had he been "cramming"? or was he making it all up, and just fooling him?

One piece of information Hardy could prove for himself, but he was delighted to receive it a little beforehand. It was about those inquisitive-looking young men with the great heavy canes.

"They are runners for the Adelphi and Athenics, the two leading college societies, out for their annual rival canvass. Pretty soon some of them will be along here and try to pledge y— to pledge us," said the pale young man with the glasses.

Sure enough, he had hardly done speaking, when one of the heavy-caned youths came along the car aisle, and stopped opposite their seat.

"I presume you are young gentlemen about to enter college?" respectfully touching his hat.

"Yes, sir," said Nick promptly, perhaps a little proudly.

"Are you pledged?"

"No, sir," said Nick.

"My preference is for the Athenics," said the pale young man with the glasses, bowing with an air that seemed to put the matter beyond argument. Thereupon the heavy-caned youth suddenly lost all interest in him, and gave his whole attention to Hardy, and for the next five minutes, so glibly ran his tongue, Nick must have listened to at least five pages of excellent reasons why he should join the Adelphi.

There was a droll twinkle in the pale young man's eyes, behind his glasses. Nick could see it at the corners; and possibly it hurt the effect of the eloquence he was just

then hearing. He finally said he believed he would "wait awhile, and think the subject over;" and the anxious runner passed on, promising to "see him again."

Our two "candidates" had not time to forget his visit before another of the heavy-caned fraternity appeared, and stopped beside them precisely as the first had done.

"Young gentlemen intending to enter college?"—interrogatively, and with a slight bow.

Hardy nodded.

"Are you pledged?"

The sly twinkle in the pale young man's eyes, behind his glasses, now broadened for an instant almost to a comical glow.

"Not very lately," he replied.

Runner No. 2 looked at him sharply as if half suspicious that he was quizzing him. But the glasses stared straight ahead, and the face was solemn as a stone. Runner

No. 2 resumed his "cheek" at once. Hardy had answered "no," of course.

"Well, then, gentlemen, it's a foregone conclusion that you'll both be 'Thenians as soon as you know the facts," quoth he of the heavy cane.

"Will you give me your names, please?" taking out a note-book.

"Nicholas Hardy, sir."

"My name is Henry Pondright," meekly answered he of the spectacles.

And thereupon followed about five pages of excellent reasons why Hardy and Pondright should join the Athenics.

"Any more coming?" inquired Nick, when the last visitor had passed on, leaving them still unpledged, but promising to "see them again."

"No more," said his companion, bursting into a laugh,— "not till you get to New Harbor."

They reached New Harbor at last amid din of engine-bells and discordant shouts, and rushing crowds, and clouds of subterranean smoke.

Hardy was promptly on his feet, but when he turned to ask another question, the pale young man with very light hair and steel-bowed glasses was gone.

“Pandemonium!” That was what Nick said to himself when he finally elbowed his way out of the car, and stepped down into the hurly-burly on the platform. Sharp-looking youngsters with big canes were running and jumping out and in everywhere, and four of them beset him, one before, one behind, and one at each ear, asking him if he was “pledged.” For the moment he heartily wished he was. One put his hand on his shoulder and inquired if he had friends in the city; another caught him by the button and wanted to know at what hotel he in-

tended to put up; another offered to show him the way to the examination-rooms; another seized his carpet-bag and insisted on carrying it for him. Finding himself unable to answer all the questions at once, our hero answered none of them.

Struggling out of the jam around the landings, he climbed the stairs, and by the time he reached the street he had parted with most of his too friendly persecutors — as a horse “sheds” his flies when he gets out of the woods.

Only one stuck to him, an enthusiastic 'Delphian Sophomore, who carried his carpet-bag in spite of him, marched him up Meeting Street to the vicinity of the colleges, talking as fast as he could all the way, bundled him into a restaurant, and dined him regardless of expense, talking of course all the time, and then, still talking, waited on him to the examination-rooms.

That Hardy did not pledge himself to that young man's society was a wonder of firmness no doubt.

But now the grand trial of all was before him — though it depended largely on himself whether his escape from the society runners into the ordeal of old Cabinet Building would prove a leap “out of the fat into the fire.” Scattered about the dingy place, at little tables, he saw between eighty and a hundred distracted-looking “young gentlemen about to enter college” (if they could), and, moving here and there and everywhere among them, those terribly exact men who snared boys with Greek roots, and shut them up in Latin cases and subjunctive moods, and impaled them on mathematical points. It was awful. But there was a queer shock in store for him, and when it came, strange to say, it set him all right again. Something in the appearance of one of the examiners, who stood leaning

over a candidate, scrutinizing his papers, caught his eye, and impressed him as familiar. As he straightened up, Nick, to his utter amazement, recognized his railway-car acquaintance, the little, beardless, pale young man with very light hair and steel-bowed glasses! In all his life, Nick, so it seemed to him, had never experienced so odd a sensation as he felt at that moment. Dread of the trial before him was the only thing that kept him from laughing.

He was assured afterwards that Tom Tracy, the cool Sophomore who had taken down that pale young man's name in the cars and expected to pledge him to the Athenics, felt a still odder sensation, when, the next autumn, he walked in to the first recitation in logarithms, and saw Tutor Pondright, the new division officer, in the desk. And Tom never heard the last of that "sell" on himself, when the story leaked out.

At the instant of Nick's comical amazement the steel-bowed glasses turned his way. There was a slight bow, and a conscious mutual smile. That and nothing more. But our hero's confidence was completely restored. He was among men after all. When the examiners came and set him his questions, he saw little that he had not seen before. He had made good use of his books during his year at Hightown, and forgotten none of his excellent preparation. His marks were far above average when he had done; and he was enrolled for matriculation.

A dozen or more, Sophomores and Juniors, Adelpi and Athenic men, were lying in wait outside old Cabinet Building, ready to seize the Freshmen as fast as they came out. Nick was taken possession of by the talkative youth who had carried his carpet-bag, and one or two other Adelpians, and would have been borne off bodily if his wit and cool

good-nature had not suggested a way to make them let him alone. Joining another Freshman named Hobart Whately, he took a turn around the venerable college buildings, and finally seated himself with his companion in a position which commanded a view of the entrances to the two society rooms. Every few minutes runners would come up with new "victims" and disappear inside, and at their safe distance Hardy and Whately watched them for some time. Occasionally a poor fellow standing undecided, like a turkey on a fence, would be pulled and hauled by electioneering rivals till he hardly dared to say his soul was his own, and that part of it was sufficiently amusing, even to one who expected to be a "victim" himself. Nick was in no hurry just now; but it was not many hours before he knew the whole process, and could indorse every word of the poet's lines, —

“On either hand in solemn conclave met,
The veils half lifted, and the man-traps set,
Crouched spider-like in cloistered watch the twain
Contending senates of a new ‘campaign.’
Each on his chair in centre of command,
With skin-deep smile and show of cordial hand,
The reigning Seniors, ‘mid their chosen corps,
Played the deep craft and planned the social war;
While, ranged before their several dens all day,
Th’ appointed Gobblers, trained to cover prey,
And paid with hope of honors for the year,
Pothered the green-horns at each tingling ear.
The tyros staggered — still the Gobblers plied,
And bored, and badgered them from side to side,
Till cross-fire suasion, and the dire duress
O’ercame — and half by knowledge, half by guess,
The meek novitiates, sick with doubt and din,
Like sheep to slaughter, right or left rolled in.”

Nick Hardy, as I said, felt in no hurry to “roll in” himself. He had got his first taste of college politics, and though he had already made up his mind which of the societies he should join, he intended to go ahead no faster than he could know what he was doing, and

what was expected of him. In the months that followed he learned to value the many real benefits of these college societies—their literary privileges, their facilities for personal improvement, their rhetorical and parliamentary drill; and even in the harmless warfare and serio-burlesque “politics” and hard work of the annual elections and canvassing campaigns, he took an active part, as every manly youth may, with as much profit as amusement.

Having been told that it was desirable, if not necessary, to secure a boarding-place in advance of the Fall term, our Freshman made inquiries, and engaged accommodations at easy distance; after which, having still considerable time on his hands (for he purposed to spend the night in the city), he found Hobart Whately again, and took another stroll around the college buildings. The old Chapel, the Art Gallery, the Laboratory, the

Library, the Philosophical Rooms, the Natural History Collection, were all in turn visited, and last of all the two found themselves on the top of Minerva Hall. The view of the grounds below, and of the surrounding city embowered in the soft foliage of its elms, was very delightful from the roof, and they lingered there, leaning over the balustrades, or walking from side to side in busy conversation, till the sun went down. Then they concluded they would go down too. Descending to the south tower-door, through which they had come up, they found it locked!

“Now, here’s a fix for us,” quoth Whately. “How we shall be laughed at!”

“Who cares for their laughing,” said Hardy. “The main point with us now is *to get out*. Wonder where the janitor went to.”

“What an idea, locking the door at sundown, any way!” said Whately.

Both ran up to the roof again, and Hardy smiled to detect himself involuntarily looking round for a scuttle-hole. No way of escape appeared. There was nothing left for them but to shout down for help. Numbers of persons were crossing the grounds and passing in the street.

“Say! Send the man with the key to unlock that tower-door, will you?”

Some chaffing, and considerable laughter came up from below before they got any direct response. Finally a voice cried, —

“Hold on! Don’t throw yourself over! I’m coming with the key.”

They went down and waited a long time at the door till they concluded they were being humbugged; but at last they heard steps ascending the stairs. Then some one shouted through the key-hole, “*Are you pledged?*”

It was the voice of an enterprising Athenian. He had comprehended the situation,

and taken it upon himself to play warder. The Freshmen could not help feeling indignant.

“No; bother your pledge! But will you let us out?” said Whately.

“Pledge yourselves to the Athenics, and out you go; if not, no.”

“Very well,” quoth Hardy; “then I think I’ll spend the night up here;” and he turned to go up the tower-stairs, leaving his companion to continue the parley if he chose. The parley was evidently continued to some purpose, for just as Nick was about to shout for some one to send the janitor, he heard Whately’s voice calling up amid roars of laughter, —

“Say, Hardy! *Are you pledged?*”

“Yes,” sung out Hardy with all the strength of his lungs, and, starting to return, he met the volunteer turnkey with Whately and half a dozen Sophomores, all convulsed

with merriment over the joke, for Whately had actually been pledged before the door was opened. He declared, however (greatly to the mirth of the rest, of course), that he had made up his mind long before. Of Hardy certainly that assertion was quite true. Both he and Whately joined the Athenics that evening, and in the grand jollification meeting held in the Society Hall, Hardy gave a grotesque account of the adventure in the tower, and its results, that called forth screams of applause and laughter.

Linus Dartford, who opened the tower-door, was a Junior, a good fellow, but a joker who relished nothing more keenly than to "take a Freshman in." He and Hardy were always on familiar terms after that evening, and often, when there was any banter between them, Hardy would jocosely accuse him of being the one who *locked* the door, as well as the one who unlocked it.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH NICK IS SHAKEN UP AND TESTED.

How should he rule himself in ghostly health

Who never learned one lesson for the same?—OLD PLAY.

Whipping! That's virtue's governess,

Tutoress of arts and sciences;

That mends the gross mistakes of nature;

.

That lays foundation for renown,

And all the honors of the gown.—HUDIBRAS.

HAVE you seen my Sidney?"

Now Hardy did not know "Sidney" from Adam or Julius Cæsar, and consequently could not have identified him if he had met him in a dozen places. He might have "seen Sidney," and he might not. And when Mrs. Hinnipick, his landlady, hurled that question

at him across the dinner-table, as her first greeting on his arrival in the city at the commencement of the college term, he was considerably taken aback. He liked to be asked questions that he could answer. He could not answer that, and he told Mrs. Hinnipick so.

“He did not come home last night, and he wasn't here to breakfast this morning,” said Mrs. Hinnipick, with a worried look.

Hardy made some commiserating remark, as his gentlemanly duty required, of course, and meanwhile glanced at the other boarders, eight young men, mostly strangers. There was a comical expression on all their faces, and some of them appeared to be trying very hard to keep sober. The efforts of one youngster in that line — a stocky, stubby little fellow whose name was Proctor (shrunk afterwards to Proc) — had turned him as red as a turkey. Proc had a habit of swelling up

and turning red whenever he was holding more fun than he could carry, and he could seldom save himself, even in polite company, without breaking out in a little cackling laugh, so that he came to be called "Snickerby" by his classmates quite as often as anything else.

The boarders were all Freshmen, as Hardy soon learned. Mrs. Hinnipick had but lately undertaken the boarding business, and she had her own reasons for selecting new Freshmen, as likely to be more quiet, meek, and manageable than members of the higher classes. Perhaps she chose wisely; but, judging from present indications, the meek propriety, and strict, courteous gravity of her guests were destined to be put to some severe strains. Mrs. Hinnipick had asked every one of them the same question about her "Sidney," and, with the exception of two, who had arrived a day sooner than the rest,

not a soul of them yet knew "Sidney" by sight. Boys in feeling as they still were, it was only the ludicrous side of the mother's anxiety in the case that struck them; and our hero could not wholly resist the queer contagion. If he could he would not have been Nick Hardy. Mrs. Hinnipick's unceremonious way of catching up a fellow and pinning him in her domestic catechism before he had a chance to say "How-do-you-do, I-hope-I-see-you-well," or to shake hands, or even to know who "Sidney" was, impressed him, if possible, even more absurdly than it had the others; and besides, taking his cue from their looks, he inferred that there could be nothing very serious the matter with the landlady's son.

"He had two lessons to give in Germany Row, and one in Savin Street, and he thought he might attend Professor Stombacher's organ exhibition," said Mrs. Hinnipick; for though

the dinner progressed (and it was a good one), and the Freshmen talked about concerns of their own so as to have a polite excuse for smiling, the good lady would not let them forget the subject that was most on her mind.

“Is it an unusual thing for your son to be absent such a length of time, Mrs. Hinnipick?” inquired Matt Calvin, a wag, severely straightening his face.

“Unusual, yes; but sometimes, you know, he —” began Mrs. Hinnipick volubly, but just then the opening door cut her short. Suddenly entered a little sleek, long-haired young man, and made a rush for the head of the table. Simultaneously Mrs. Hinnipick made a rush for him, dropping the spoon she was serving with, and upsetting the pudding-sauce.

“O Sidney, my son, you have come!” she cried, throwing her arms around his neck.

“Do you know how I have worried and worried? Where *could* you have b—”

“There, there, mother; *I'm hungry,*” protested Sidney, getting into his chair as quick as he could, and looking sheepishly at the tremendously amused faces of the nine strangers.

His affectionate reception before so many witnesses, evidently abashed him a good deal; and besides, Proc's overloaded risibles just then went off in a loud snicker, which the young man could not fail to hear. Mrs. Hin-nipick's fond questions and doting attentions, and Sidney's efforts to parry them, completed the comicality of the scene, and the well-mannered Freshmen in vain tried to head off the gathering laughter by plunging into a profound discussion of the Crimean War and the possible consequences if the Russian Bear finally swallowed the sick Turkey. Poor Proc wanted to explode again so badly that

he finally had to leave his pudding and get up and go out. The "war" discussion flagged miserably, whereat our friend Nick, coming to the rescue, told the Minerva Hall story again, and under cover of that the company indulged in the roar they had been aching for. Dinner over, they all went out, and found "Snickerby" waiting for them, still holding his sides. At least there were nine Freshmen thoroughly acquainted with each other now. The causes which made their first dinner together ridiculous had brought about that result, without costing anything. And so we will leave Sidney to explain to his mother, in private, where he had been, and what he had been doing.

Nick Hardy had left New Harbor, after his examination, without staying to Commencement. There would be opportunities enough in after years to witness the performances of

that grand day. A week of his vacation he had spent at Fenwick Falls, helping his sister Jane (who was now teaching the district school) in such studies as she had begun, and lending a hand wherever he could be of use to his hard-working parents and the rest of the family. His father had got through calling him "good-for-nothing," and "born-to-be-hung." His brother Silas had not yet been heard from, though four years had passed since he went (or was supposed to go) to California.

Nicholas' week at the Falls included also a short visit to Squire Gammel at Fenwick Village, and his former teachers at the Academy.

The remainder of our brevet-Freshman's summer time was devoted to steady farm work, with Uncle Ben James in his Stonefield home.

He came now to his college tasks with

toughened muscles and a clear brain, ready to undertake any reasonable amount of study, and, better than all, with upright principles, a sound heart, and a mind of his own, that made him quite as difficult a customer for enticers to seduce as he was for blackguards and bullies to handle. His first recitations were triumphs, and once master of his business, and familiar to university routine, he marched upon Euclid, and Horace, and "Balbus," and "Sophroniscus," and every other formidable work in his way, with a vigor that carried all before it.

No sooner was the excitement of recruiting season over with the two great rival societies than the more quiet work of roping in new members for the secret societies commenced. In most of the large colleges every class has its secret society or societies, and, of course, electioneers for its own, the retiring members of each year aiming to get into their

places as many as they can from the class next below them. The liveliest business of this kind is usually the gathering in and initiating the Freshmen by the Sophomores. Hardy was confidentially button-holed several times by the leaders in both Phi Gamma and Delta Rho* without much effect. These affairs were all conjury to him, being a new man. But meeting Linus Dartford, who had belonged to Phi Gamma in his Freshman days, and being asked what he intended to do, he waited to hear that condescending Junior's explanations, and concluded to take his advice. He was duly booked as a Phi Gamma man. So also were Whately, Calvin, and Proc, his new friends and fellow-boarders.

“Initiation night,” the unique novelty of

* Names of the two Freshman secret societies, formed of letters of the Greek alphabet, being the initials of some “mystic” phrase.

average Freshman experience ("uniquity," Hardy subsequently called it, in humorous suggestion of a more familiar word), soon came, with its climax of mysterious preparations; and notice was served on the candidates to present themselves in the third-story entry of Breed's Building, at 9 o'clock P. M. Promptly at the hour Hardy was on hand with the others; and the noises that came from within satisfied him that he had not guessed too wildly what was coming, for he had caught an inkling of these secret ceremonies, and of the way candidates were put through, from vague hints accidentally dropped in his hearing.

Before he and his associates had time to consider the situation, or compare impressions, six tall goblins rushed out, some in red, some in black, some in yellow, some with horns and tails, all wearing demon masks, and in a trice he found himself blindfolded

and hustled off through a long passage that seemed to run down an inclined plane, and smelt of brimstone like a veritable *descensus Averni*. Our friend Nick had made up his mind to "see the thing through," and had no idea of offering resistance, as some of the Freshmen did that night, who were foolish enough to forget that their consent to join a sect's society implied submission to be tumbled about in whatever rough way the custom might be. On and on he went, the two muscular goblins who had him in charge gripped him fast by his arms; round flying corners, down winding stairs, *up* winding stairs, along low galleries musty with mould, by doors that belched out gunpowder smoke, through spaces that echoed with strange whispers and ghostly groans, under floors that rumbled with mimic thunder, till it seemed to him as if he had travelled a mile, when suddenly he felt a crowd around him,

and the bandage was snatched from his eyes. He had reached the penetralia of mock terrors. Blue lights were burning everywhere, and "demons" in every possible variety of horrible masquerade greeted him with salutatory bellowings, and pinched and pulled and hauled him till he began to think they would strip off all his clothes.

Then his hands were tied behind him, and he found himself standing in front of something rigged up like a judgment bench, on which an owl-faced, nondescript-looking being sat in scowling dignity, flanked by two goblin guards in horned hats three feet high, and holding pitchforks in their hands. There was a moment's silence, and a deep voice said, "Freshman! canst thou take the irrevocable oath?"

"I can," replied Nick, wondering to himself if he looked as pale and scared as it was proper to look.

“Then kiss the iron book!” said the same deep voice, and the echo ran around, bellowing, groaning, croaking through all the notes of the gamut: “Kiss the Iron Book!”

Nick was led forward a step or two, and stooped to kiss the iron book, when quick as thought a sharp shock threw him flat on the floor. (It was a dry night, and the electric battery worked to a charm.)

Yells of derision rose on every side, and hollow voices howled, “Take him away! He can’t take the oath. Put him in the cradle!” and in an incredibly short space of time our hero was bundled heels over head into a truck like an inverted hencoop, and whirled out of the presence-room into a dark hall that seemed to end nowhere in particular, to take his “cradle-ride.” Rush, crash, clatter, rattlety-bang, the strange vehicle went, over lumber, rubbish, and sticks of wood, Nick lying all sides up at once, and shutting his

mouth tight to keep his teeth in his head. Would it never stop? If his walk was a mile long, surely, he thought, his ride must have been two. O, the rocking, and the knocking, and bumping and thumping, that he got in that two-wheeled cradle! It stopped as suddenly as it started; and before Nick could fairly decide whether he was horizontal or perpendicular, he was chucked into a closet and left there to settle the question. The closet was pitch-dark, and written in letters of fire on the inside of the door he read this cheerful notice:

THE BEGINNING OF HORRORS!

(The phosphorus was evaporating pretty rapidly, however, and the letters were fading out.)

After some delay the door was thrown open, and one of his goblin guides seized him by the collar with the terrible command, "Come forth from the Adytum! Further mysteries await you!"

In a moment he was dragged into another hideous scene of blue lights and howling maskers, and delivered over to the *Persona Mortis*, a long-legged fellow dressed like a skeleton. In this individual's hands he took his first lesson in witch-dancing. Thrust into the middle of a weird circle of figures that hopped about and threw things into "the mystic caldron" (a huge tub disguised with black paint), and caterwauled the incantation in Macbeth —

“Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat, and slips of yew,
Slivered in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips,”

and the rest of it, he began to go round, willy-nilly, with the chanters, when, presto! he was caught by the heels behind and pitched into the caldron himself.

“All right,” thought Nick; “am I considered a piece of a Jew, or a Turk, or a Tartar. — which?”

He was just yielding to a strong temptation to be a Tartar, when somebody "stirred him up" with a wooden spoon as big as a coal-heaver's shovel, and the next instant he was ladled out on the same spoon amid cries of, "He's done; he's did; he'll do!" But what, what now? No sooner did his feet touch the floor than he felt a trap-door give way beneath him, and down he went like the hammer of a pile-driver! In a second he struck something soft, and bounded so high that he fully believed he was going to be shot back through the floor where he fell. That was the "grand bounce;" and when the Sophomores down-stairs had finished tossing him in the blanket, he was presented before another sort of tribunal, where a monstrous official with a bear's head, and wearing a tremendous pair of spectacles, asked questions and gave advice. Here he found several candidates besides himself, who had been similarly put

through, and the mock Rhadamanthus addressed them all together in an absurd jumble of macaronic Latin-English.

“O tirones, recenti out of your cradles; bound to be plucked et bamboozlendi—”

Or, “Fresh homines, nuper matrium apron-strings erupti; qui come to Academician ut studeatis Euclid, preterea eat hash; quos kickaturi undique Sophomores’ boots—”

Or, “Pueri innocentes! qui think omnium scholasticum some pumpkins, et quisque college rub-a-dub great shakes; intuemini, contuemini, mind your eye! Cave tutores, cave Juniores, cave virgines, cave peanuts and pop beer! nisi you want tremendus Prex after you cum sharp stick, aut toti Faculty baculis broomstickorum,” and so on.

When the scene changed again, Nick and his companions found themselves in a handsome but not very large hall, where a small company of Sophomores, and a scattering of

Juniors, apparently waiting in session, rose on their entrance, and greeted them with cheers. This was the meeting-chamber of the Phi Gammas, and when the not very complex ceremony of "swearing in" and subscribing their names was over with, each new member was called on for a speech. Nick's speech was a short one, but it was exceedingly well received; and his serio-comic confession, "My shaking-up this evening has settled me to the bottom, the best place in the world to rise from. Whatever self-conceit I had has all been jolted out of me to-night. I came in as big as anybody, but there's nothing left of me now but a wooden spoonful," was hailed with vociferous applause.

There was a cry for the Juniors after the new members had said their say, and while the society was waiting for another squad of Freshmen to come in; but only one of them responded, and that was Linus Dartford. He

congratulated the society, and paid Nick some generous compliments. "I should know by his looks," said he, "that the young brother would measure himself as modestly as he has to-night, and that he would *very soon outgrow his own measure*, too. He has begun his college life in the bowl of the wooden spoon, but that measure can't hold that kind of man. He'll run over the wooden spoon before he's a Sophomore, and by the time he's a Junior there'll be enough of him to pass round to all the Phi Gamma Freshmen of the third generation."

When all the "mystic rites" were over, and the society broke up for the night, a Sophomore fastened himself to Nick, and hinted very broadly that he would be expected to "treat."

"Very well; come on, and I'll pay for the oysters willingly," said Nick. "I'm hungry myself."

“But,” said the Soph, “don’t you know I’m the fellow that put you through. It’s always the Freshman’s treat.”

“Well, if you mean *liquor*,” replied Nick, “that’s something I never drink, nor help anybody else to drink. I’m with you till you come to that; then I stop.”

Somehow the Soph seemed to conclude that he had got hold of the wrong man at that moment, for suddenly remarking, “O, you aren’t the chap, after all,” he started off to find some other Freshman whom he had “put through;” and Nick, foregoing his oysters, went home to bed.

CHAPTER IV.

MIND AND MUSCLE.

“My heart swells high and burns for the encounter;

Let us on!”

BROOKE.

BY the end of the first month of Freshman year Nick Hardy's class had become so far interested together by mutual acquaintance, and a common spirit and purpose, that they could be called “organized.” The natural leaders took their places by tacit consent, the best men of muscle and the best men of mind had been found out, and the orators and poets duly marked and credited.

In the old Hermeum, which had been the Freshmen's headquarters for more than a quarter of a century, — being one of the

most ancient of the college buildings with recitation-rooms, — a meeting of the class was held about this time, at which every member was present, and apparently boiling over with some recent enthusiasm. It was the first really full rally of the new class, and it might be expected that all the members destined to be prominent would show off their characteristic points. Heman Timothy, the giant of the class (in physical size), was the chairman, and he made a gorgeous opening speech. “Gentlemen,” he said, “according to long custom, it falls to us in turn to throw down the gauntlet for the great annual contest between the Freshmen and the Sophomores. We are ready, and we have met here to do it. [*Cheers.*] Gentlemen, it is well known that in this trial we do not meet our adversaries on fair and equal terms. They are experts. They have fought one battle before. But we new men can match

them in strength [*cheers*] and size [*vociferous hurrahs for the big chairman*], and more than match them in numbers and courage [*thunders of applause*]; and, in the eloquent language of the great Agamemnon, 'Who's afraid?' [*violent stamping and loud laughter.*] We *defy* their superior skill [*three hurrahs and a 'tiger'*]; and remember, gentlemen, that if we beat them with this odds against us we cover ourselves with glory! [*deafening applause.*] If we fail [*cries of no, no!*] — if we fall under in the fight, it will be like the torpedo under the man-of-war [*noise and great sensation*]; there won't be enough left of them to brag of their victory" [*tremendous uproar*].

Next came the fine orators of the class, as they were eagerly called up one by one. It was an hour to "kindle brave souls," Hal Stanley said. They were soon to call into the field a haughty foe. It was theirs to

wring from them a reluctant respect or earn their contempt by yielding them the only advantage in the strife. "From these gray walls more than a hundred years will watch and witness our deeds, and bright honors in story and song wait on our success. Let us meet our adversaries with a firm and gallant front, and when upon them

'Our host moves like a deep-sea wave,'

let every man weigh a ton for his class, and the shock of the encounter will be but the signal for their overthrow" [*three cheers*].

Willard Faunce fired the Freshman heart still further with suggestions to "Hang out our banners on the outer wall!" and woke a responsive yell with the sanguine exhortation to "Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war!"

Then there was a general call for spindle-shanked Barkenhead, and his expected allusions to his legs of course threw the crowd

into convulsions of noisy merriment. "The Sophomores consider us insects," he said, pointing to the big chairman amid deafening laughter. "They'll think us earthquakes when such horn-bugs of the first magnitude get hold of them. Let them meet us, and our hornets, and gallinippers, and daddy-long-legses [*uproar and great fun*] will run over them worse than the flies of Egypt or the locusts of Arabia!" and he concluded with an unconditional offer of his own legs for the good of the class.

Cries of "Hardy, Hardy!" brought out our hero Nick long enough to say that he was not much of a talker, but that he meant business, and if the class would put him somewhere near the "apex of the wedge" on battle-day, they'd find (and the Sophomores too) that he would "count thirty-six inches to the yard, and sixteen ounces to

the pound, and four pecks to the bushel.”
[“*Good, good!*” and great commotion.]

A shout for “Tolman!” called to his feet a stout fellow who had been a member of the Sophomore class for a few months the year before, and some misgivings were felt about his loyalty. He was wanted for an explanation.

He had loaded his heart twice, he said, like the Irishman’s gun; but he was all right. He had “rammed down the new-class powder on top of the old,” and the “Freshman wad” would go off *first*, even if he had to get hurt. And the stamping and cheering when he sat down showed that his explanation was satisfactory.

Then everybody screamed for “Proc! Proc! Snickerby! Speech from Proc!” But Proc only swelled up and turned red, and cackled. No one supposed he would make a speech; but it was good fun to

shout for him, and it was well known that he would fight like a badger when the time came to defend his class.

Finally, after a good deal more rodomontade and splurging, Hardy got the ear of the meeting to "nominate our chairman to head the Macedonian wedge." The secretary put the nomination, and big Timothy was voted in with a tumult of enthusiasm, in which the class yelled themselves hoarse and nearly stamped off their boot-heels.

A committee was appointed to "draw up the challenge and buy the ball," and with nine cheers apiece for the chairman, for the class, and for the college, the meeting broke up. Next morning a flaming defiance, calling the attention of the "SOPHOMORES!!" in letters of five-line pica, and with a great many exclamation-points, appeared on the front door of Ionic Hall, summoning them (if they dared) to enter the lists against the

doughty Freshmen on City Common, next Wednesday week, at 2 o'clock P. M., for the great annual trial of championship.

That afternoon the large class-room in Ionic Hall (the Sophs' headquarters) witnessed another rally quite as noisy as the one just described; and on the following morning another flaming poster appeared on the front door of the old Hermeum, accepting the challenge with jeering counter-defiance, and braggadociously welcoming the Freshmen to destruction.

“Let them come on! The caitiff pack
Shall rue, that day, the battle wrack,
And find a sod for every back!”

And if my reader has not yet discovered the meaning of all the foregoing fuss, he will find it out before the chapter closes.

Nick Hardy, as we know, was one of the

last men to shirk a physical task or shun a rough exercise. Even the hustlings and clown-tumble surprises of "initiation" had been to him a sort of comic calisthenics, accepted in the interest of personal toughness and levelling discipline, as well as of general good-humor. In the customary boy-struggles of class life, ridiculous as some of them might be, he saw a means of both social and bodily drill, and he had thought enough beyond mere present fun to appropriate from all these sportive rivalries some solid practice for the real trials by-and-by.

A young fellow so thoroughly healthy and sensible, and so well able to extract use out of nonsense, was not likely to neglect his intellectual rank. The certain classic charm that surrounds college athletics (far less felt in earlier school-life) never tempted young Hardy, as it does too many, from his textbook duties and the pursuit of sterling schol-

arship. He did not expect to be the *highest* scholar in his class, — an ambition which would have cost him more than the worth of the prize, — but his achievements in the recitation-room had already placed him among the fifth-rank men; and this, of the twelve grades which divided scholarly standing at that day, was very respectable eminence for a poor boy who had “worked his passage.”

Running the course with over a hundred young men, he did well to hold a place where he could count only twenty or thirty ahead of him. The exertion he must have expended to get abreast of the front men he gave, for the sake of his health, to walking, ball-playing, boating, gymnasium practice, and other vigorous social diversions; and, for the lighter tonics, we may be sure Nick Hardy's midriff would never wither for lack of laughter. He found time, however, besides his regular studies, to compete for a Latin

prize. Latin composition had been delightful to him from the first, and if the highest college honor had depended on mastery of "Balbus," he would have been a dangerous rival for the future "valedictorian." There were seven other students competing with him for the same prize, and the knowledge of this was an additional stimulus. So that of evenings when more careless fellows were out larking, or serenading, or eating late oyster suppers, or engaged in the more reprehensible pastime of lamp-smashing or gate-lifting, he generally spent two or three hours exercising with his Latin Prose Manual, and *Gradus ad Parnassum*.

Two armies stood in array on City Common — solid battalions of muscular youths, with belted waists, and red shirts, white shirts, blue shirts, and shirts of chamois-skin. It was the momentous Wednesday, and the two lower

college classes had met to try titles in the great annual Football game. Crowds of non-combatants surrounded the scene, clustered on the steps of the churches, and roosting on the fences and trees, spectators of the Grecian struggle. On an elevated platform that commanded a view of the whole field the excited class-committees stood arguing, and trying to settle the preliminaries with the umpire, a "resident-graduate" member of the Law School. Erect on a high curb-stone, swinging his arms wildly abroad, Willard Faunce harangued the waiting Freshmen. "Fellows! heroes! this is the day of your strength. Remember, and not throw yourselves away. When the word comes, throw yourselves into yonder host, and *go through* them! [*Great cheering.*] With our gallant leader at the front we'll fight our way to the line, and see fair play. Our adversaries will steal a victory if they can.

If they attempt it to-day they'll find us there!" [*Hurrah! hurrah!*]

Hal Stanley followed with another warlike speech. "Waste no breath, gentlemen, in shouts or battle-cries. Time enough for shouts when our triumph is won. Courage is silent. Wait the signal every man, and then go all together, like the dumb march of destroying angels! Put hearts, and hands, and feet [*cries of "legs!" and boisterous laughter*] into this fight, and yonder Sophomores shall lick the dust! Let no doubt of victory, no false thought, weaken our sinews or distract our heroic purpose! In the beautiful language of Mrs. Hemans, —

'Souls of heroes, now be strong!
 Time no more for jest and song.
 Fled from folly's festive rite,
 Turn to battle's fierce delight.
 Forth from chamber and from hall,
 Arm! The *Sophomores* must fall!'"

The orators of the opposing class meanwhile delivered similar harangues to their men, and so the time was taken up till everything was ready. In front of the Freshmen towered big Timothy. Behind him his followers, ranged in successive platoons of two, four, six, eight, ten, and so on, widened back to the rear, standing shoulder to shoulder, the weakest ranking last. Next to the champion stood Tolman and Nick Hardy. Immediately behind them mustered the redoubtable Proc, making up in muscle what he lacked in inches. This was the terrible "Macedonian wedge." It included the whole class, except Barkenhead and two or three other nimble fellows all in stout, loose, blue, flannel shirts, who hovered about the rear, as a sort of flying flankers, to look out for the ball. It was their business to get hold of it and carry it to the fence beyond the Sophomore's ground-line.

Ha! there is the signal that ends the suspense! Forth into the open, between the combatant lines, advanced the Sophs' best player on a rapid run, with the football in his hands. With a powerful kick he canted the ball. Up like a balloon it went, describing a beautiful arch through the air over the Freshmen's heads. Every eye was strained to watch its fall, Proc climbing up Nick Hardy's shoulders to see. "Hi, hi, he's got it!" But it would have been an unpardonable offence to tell *who*. Away went Barkenhead's long legs one way, two blue-shirted runners two other ways—all three aiming for the fence. Which one had the ball crushed flat in his shirt-bosom, and which two were hiding nothing but their hats? Let them find out who could catch and hold them. "Stop him! stop him!" But most of the Sophs had something else to do, for like an avalanche the "Macedonian wedge"

came ploughing into their solid square, tearing right and left, and in a moment half of the college was mixed in a general *melee*. Hats and caps flew in curves and tangents, disappearing in the crazy crush, or stuck, pounded down over their owners' eyes. Man closed with man, all heaving and tugging, and straining with huge effort and fury, the Freshmen to cover their runner to the fence, and the Sophs to force them back and keep the ball from the line. King Hubbub reigned supreme. Buttons snapped, collars burst and vanished, and clutching fingers tangled in wild hair. In the terse statement of a Freshman narrator, —

“There were stitchless shirts, and shirtless stitches ;

There were breaches of peace and pieces of breeches.”

Within a yard of the fence — a dozen Sophomores packed in the space between — raged Barkenhead, fighting his way. “Now they

have him down!" But he pulls down three Sophs with him, winding his long shanks round their legs. Now he is up! No, he is down again! But close by thundered big Timothy to the rescue, treading down the enemy and tossing them hither and thither like a rampaging buffalo, till two stalwart Sophomores seized him by the belt and by the hair. "Into 'em, Freshmen! Pull 'em off! Bravo, Bark! Don't let 'em have it!" and a score of excited Juniors, the Freshmen's allies, trying to see fair play, hovered on the edge of the war, afraid of tearing their coats. Suddenly a sharp little cackle sounded out of the thickest of the scrimmage, and up from under a chaos of kicking feet rose the inextinguishable Proc, red and reeking, and fluttering with glorious rags. Scrambling across promiscuous backs and shoulders, his shirt-tatters streaming in the wind, he rode triumphant, digging Sopho-

mores' ribs and punching heads like an animated battle-axe. Right over where struggled Barkenhead's legs (his hands holding his shirt-bosom like grim death), the sweaty little hero pitched in, and hammered, and butted, and squirmed, as impassible to blows and grabs himself as a greased pig. Then the whirlpool of fight swallowed him up again.

Hurrah! The ball, the ball! Thump it went up over the crowd, as somebody inflated and kicked it. Barkenhead had had it all the time, and he vowed by the seven cardinal virtues and the thirty-two points of compass that he had it when he touched the fence. Of course all the Sophs contradicted him; and then the clamor began, lung-power taking the place of legs and elbows. The mass of humanity untangled and surged back, each party shouting, disputing, and trying to cheer the other down. Spectators stretched their necks listening, inquiring "which beat?"

and inquiring in vain, and gaped, bewildered, at Sophomores and Freshmen gravitating apart in sections and squads, — a shifting drama of uproar and rags. Committees with a betoused mob at their heels wrangled and gesticulated before the distracted umpire; groups of exultant partisans, rallied after the storm, made babel, singing “Gaudeamus” and “Cocachelunk”; and in centre of the field Hal Stanley, mounted on two fellows’ shoulders, orated to a remnant of his class on the “Freshman triumph,” which “only prejudice and falsehood” could gainsay or deny. Truth was mighty, and would prevail; and in the far future days, when, in “the beautiful words of Mrs. Hemans,”

“ . . . some lovely dream

Back from life’s stormy fight your soul is bearing

To the green places of your boyish daring,”

it would be sweet to have their just claims

confessed, and to remember that in their first college contest they did so gallantly and well.

Who were the victors? That unsettled question speckled the dissolving view of the great game, and grew more hazy as the scene faded away. We need not try to decide it now.

The old annual Football contest is a thing of the past. It degenerated into a savage rush-and-scuffle, and became a prohibited sport.

But our friend Hardy, though he came out of it with rent trousers and half a shirt, never knew that the rough battle of his year left a single bodily harm, or kindled a spark of ill-feeling between class and class.

CHAPTER V.

WHICH ENDS IN SMOKE.

The way that youth to wisdom brings
Hides chance of some unsavory things:
Then let the venturing tyro train
A stomach that can match his brain. — ANON.

MY hero was not one of those encyclopedic human sponges who “never forget anything.” His mind was pretty good at retaining solids — particularly when he “panned out” *his own* gleanings in the gulches of knowledge. The fluid and futile particles were likely to run through, but the gold generally stayed in the pan. He remembered any piece of valuable information, but could rarely tell afterwards whether his informant wore black, or blue, or gray.

He could keep the points and argument of a good speech, but lost its tropes and "rhetorical dandelions." He could repeat the *facts* of a college lesson, but not the language in which they were stated. Many of the lighter incidentals, too, of his earlier school life, which another would have made much of, with him shared the same fate of forgetfulness. Nor had he seen fit as yet to charge his mind with mere "curiosities" of knowledge, for, though fond of the sciences, he was anything but a minute philosopher or a walking thesaurus.

If he had been more in the habit of stringing together and storing away trifles, he might have succeeded better than he did in answering a question that came to him one day in a letter from Squire Gammel, of Fenwick.

"The suit pending on that mutilated old will," wrote the squire, "threatens to last

my life out." (Hardy remembered the old will, for it had come before him rather in the line of a business exercise while he was a clerk in the squire's office, and the discourse that followed the handling of it made it almost like a date in his education.) "The case has taken a new turn," the letter continued; "or rather it has developed new complications. The bequeathed property is found to have increased, in various investments, to nearly half a million, and several new heirs have come forward claiming to represent persons named in the lost portion of the will. I have no doubt that still others will appear, and I wish to find out who they all are as soon as I can. I have reason to think that descendants (in the female line) of one of the alleged heirs, concerning whom there is some curious evidence, settled somewhere in the vicinity of New Harbor, — county or city, — possibly the latter. The

family name is McRagh. If you will ascertain whether any of that name are living in the city, you will earn my thanks, besides the fee which I inclose."

Now, if our friend Nicholas had remembered a certain chapter of antiquarian gossip, recited to him more than a year ago by Dr. Pliny Norcross, of Hightown, along with considerable cabalistic talk of wooden spoons and genealogical orthographies; and if he had happened to remember his exploit with "bonny-clabber" (baugh-naugh-claugh-paugh) in the old Red Shanty Spelling-School, a great deal longer time ago, — he might have put this and that together, and hit the very thing he missed in the question, "Are there any McRaghs in New Harbor?"

As it was, having felt but little interest in the old doctor's yarn, he had allowed it to go into one ear and out at the other, and had quite forgotten the name it broke

off with; or, in fact, that any new name had been mentioned in it at all. Accordingly, when he read what the squire wrote, he did not catch either the right "ear-mark," or the right mouthful of vowel, as he would have done if "bonny-clabber," and wooden spoon to serve it, had come to him in a lucky thought of the moment. He pronounced McRagh just as it looked to him (not being an Irishman), and struck the wrong key-note when he went to play on the City Directory. He ran through all the Mc's and Macs; then he walked through them; then he crept through them, and even made an excursion into the Mags; but the name he was after did not seem to be there. He found Magraw, and McGregors enough, but there was no McRagh; and he was obliged to write and tell the squire so. He wanted to return the twenty-dollar check sent him as a "fee," for he felt that he had done

nothing to earn it; but some previous experience of Squire Gammel's way of making presents made him very sure that his old benefactor would resent it as an impertinence if he sent the money back.

He wrote his answer, and even the thought that occurred to him before he closed, of referring the squire to Dr. Norcross, of Hightown, as a man who "knew everything" in old genealogies and oddities of unpublished history — did not bring with it any hint that he had ever heard the name he was asked to look for. With the promise to address the doctor immediately himself, he closed the letter and sent it. Then he wrote to Hightown, begging the doctor to forward to Squire Gammel any information he might possess; and that done, the matter passed entirely from his mind, not to be recalled again till eight months afterwards.

“Have you seen Sidney?” Mrs. Hinnick had asked this question so often that her nine young men had got used to it, and could generally dispose of it with no more extravagant demonstration than smiling in their sleeves. But on this particular evening the old inquiry seemed to tickle every boarder at the supper-table half into fits, and Proc let off one of his little cackles before the words had fairly left the good landlady’s mouth.

Now it may not be very important for the reader to know, but I might as well say it here, that Sidney, the landlady’s long-haired son, was a genius in a small way,—or affected something of the kind,—and cultivated one of the fine arts. He was strong on the pianoforte and guitar, and his chief visible means of support was giving music-lessons. He was a quiet, well-meaning youth, with just a streak of simplicity in his

constitution, perhaps, and his only eccentricity was a habit of not coming home with exact regularity to meals and to bed.

His musical pursuits, and the somewhat uncertain demands of his business (his pupils being rather transient, and picked up here and there), no doubt accounted for this mostly, and his facility for saying "yes," and for taking every polite invitation to eat, or to stay anywhere, as an evidence of special friendship, would explain the rest. His unpunctualities were chiefly noticeable from the ado his mother made over them, which, inasmuch as Sidney was twenty years old, and not at all "wild," should have been quite unnecessary. But it was Mrs. Hinnick's way to worry, and it was as natural for her to fidget about Sidney when he failed to come to time, as for an invalid to nurse a pet rheumatism, or asthma, or gout.

It so happened that on this particular

evening Sidney had come home in good season, and made his appearance among the students (there were but six of them) in the parlor, but considerably changed as to his outer man. The bluff greetings he received — such as “Hillo, Henpeck! been reciting to Professor Trip?” (alluding to a certain popular colored barber named Quon, whom the students dubbed “Professor of Craniological Tripsis;”) “Say, Sid, now you can have your head examined, can’t you?” “Ah, Sidney, why didn’t you save me *one* of your tresses?” &c., &c. — would have indicated plainly enough to an outsider that the young man had just had his hair cut, and cut rather close. From the parlor Sidney had passed up stairs to his room, and when Mrs. Hinnipick, meantime busy with her cook, and all unconscious of his arrival, rang the tea-bell, he had descended to supper behind the six students, and from some freak of the moment dropped

into a vacant chair that was not his own; so that at the very instant Mrs. Hinnipick was asking "Have you seen my Sidney?" there sat her son at the table, a very much embarrassed young man indeed.

The innocence and perfect absurdity of the question, joined with the cause of the blunder and Sidney's looks, broke down the gravity of the students at once, and Proc's preliminary cackle was followed by a chorus of laughter so hearty and so loud that it soon forced its own explanation. In the height of it Nick Hardy entered, with Matt Calvin and Hobart Whately, and their arrival and comical surprise of course gave the storm of merriment fresh wind. Calvin, seeing Sidney with his cropped head sitting out of place, and in *his* chair, did not wait to know what the real joke was, but pouncing upon that young man in well-mimicked indignation, he invited him summarily to his

feet, and forthwith marched him to his own seat beside his bewildered and astonished mother. The paroxysm of recognition that followed capped the climax, and the tumult culminated in Mrs. Hinnipick's quaint little scream, "Why, Sidney, *is it* YOU?" It was some time before the tickled company could sober down, and the three last comers, having but just got at the key of the fun, laughed louder than the rest, taking (as Nick said) their digestion first and their meal afterwards. Mrs. Hinnipick laughed too, and declared that she must really buy a pair of spectacles, and wear them, she was *so* near-sighted (a resolution which she shortly after carried out).

"Good-bye, Sidney," said Nick, when the students were leaving the table. "You have put me in mind of a neglected duty. I am going to see Professor Trip, and have my hair cut too."

“And I think *I’ll* go to Doctor Rubber-gum (a favorite city dentist) and have my eye-teeth cut,” muttered John Fay Lewis, a fellow-Freshman, as they all passed into the street. Something in John’s manner of speaking provoked the rest to ask, “What’s the matter, Lewis?”

“Humph!” ejaculated John; “you don’t take;” and then there was a pause. “Have any of *you* fellows been humbugged by that Sophomore tax-collector in a stovepipe hat?” presently quoth John with childlike frankness. “He came round last week pretending there was a ‘lamp-tax’ assessed on all Freshmen, and I didn’t know him, and he got a dollar and a half out of me, and —”

The rest of it was drowned in a roar as loud as the one that shook the supper-table. *Two* of the company (who did not make quite so much noise as the others) had in fact been imposed upon in the same way, but

they concluded not to own it just then. The "lamp-tax" swindle afforded conversation enough till the party separated, Hardy going to the barber's, and the rest wherever they chose.

It was a long time before Nick could be served, and when finally Quon had finished him off in his best style, he started for his room, the college clock striking nine just as he crossed the Campus.* Then it occurred to him that "Professor Paley" had overlooked him in his morning round that day. ("Professor Paley" was the negro who toted *pails*, his duty being to carry away the students' slops.) Having scrupulous notions of health and neatness, he decided that he must interview that delinquent scavenger, and give him a mild "blowing up," and impress him once for all with the fact that

* The college green.

he, Nicholas Hardy, U. G. (under-graduate), roomed in North Central, lower entry, back, dormitory No. 5. But by the time he had accomplished this errand Nick's evening was considerably far spent, and he hastened home, preoccupied with thoughts of crowded work and late study-hours. His key rattled in the lock of No. 5. The door swung open. Phew! He had stepped inside and found himself in an abyss of tobacco-smoke! The room was as black as Erebus, and it seemed as if every cubic foot of air in it would weigh a pound. But Nick was not in the habit of backing off his own ground,—at least till he knew what there was to be afraid of,—and certain suppressed movements around him enabled him to guess at the cause of the mischief. Stumbling over one or two pairs of mysterious legs, he reached his table, found a match in the drawer, and struck a light. Then through

the grim nimbus of smoke that filled the room he saw a dozen disguised figures sprawled on the chairs, the settee, and the wood-box, with great meerschaums in their mouths. A flush of resentment and disgust burned his face for the moment, as he glanced from his unwelcome visitors to his books, and mentally calculated his plundered time. But he summoned all his philosophy and reminded himself that he must make the best of it. "Good evening, gentlemen!" For reply one of the Sophomores (that was the way Nick spelt the "gentlemen" under their disguises) got up and shut the door. He could do no more than that, for Nick had pocketed the key. ("Shrewd boy," one of the pipe party was overheard to say, patronizingly, some time afterwards, alluding to that piece of caution.) The twelve Sophs — who by hook or crook had got in through the window during Hardy's absence, to

“smoke the Freshman out” — had had a pretty long wait, and had almost smoked themselves out before he arrived. Nick often said, laughing over the recollection, “Nobody but a Freshman would have taken the trouble to hunt up ‘Professor Paley’ between nine and ten o’clock P. M., but I owed to that, more than to anything else, the turn the affair took that night.”

He noticed that some of the smokers were not pulling very vigorously at their pipes; and when the door was clapped to, to save all the fume that had been made for his benefit, he remarked, “That’s right; it’s getting chilly. It’s a foggy night, and the air smells of old cheese. ’Pon my word, the fire’s nearly out!” and at that he piled some kindlings on the coals, set up the blower, and made a tearing blaze. The heat and the tobacco-smoke together made the room like the inside of a coal-pit, but Nick with

huge effort suppressed his inclination to cough and sneeze. He would choke before he would gratify his polite friends with such a hint of weakness. He knew his lungs were strong, and his stomach was strong, and he could stand it if they could. "You don't seem disposed to talk much, gentlemen," he continued, — for the care not to have their voices recognized kept them rather mum. "Well, you smoke and I'll study; I've got a staving long lesson." And he began to turn the leaves of his Greek lexicon. "Here, your pipes have gone out," — addressing two of the Sophs, who seemed to be losing their interest in the sport. "Fill up, and have another light," holding out a bunch of matches. There was a passage of silence, broken only by the rustle of lexicon leaves and the puff, puff of the pipes, till the flue of a volcano would have been breezy climate to the fog and stench of vile canaster and

killikinick that thickened the room. But Hardy betrayed no uneasiness. The smokers were losing patience. Possibly they had taken his measure, and thought him dangerous, else they would have undertaken to "haze" him in some other way. They had come loaded for a mock lecture, besides the smoke; but Nick's provoking endurance and *sang froid* nearly collapsed them. At length the chief spokesman ventured on his preamble.

"Freshman," (in a big, made-up voice,) "at the commencement of your college career" (a peculiar noise from a Soph on the wood-box) "advice from your elders is needful respecting your personal habits. First, *never allow yourself to use tobacco*," (the Soph on the wood-box got up and moved away. The temperature of the room had gone up to about 100° Fahrenheit.) "The filthy weed beclouds the brain, destroys the finer sensi-

bilities, unsettles the judgment, weakens the will, and —” There the “lecturer” suddenly discontinued, for just then the Soph in the opposite corner leaned over with a squawk of agony, and deposited the contents of his stomach on the floor. Immediately another followed suit, and, once started, the dire contagion seized full half the company, till the gagging, and retching, and upheaving all around the room created a scene worse than a sea-sick ship-cabin. In another minute the door was desperately flung open, and the discomfited smokers beat an ignominious retreat.

“Professor Paley” found enough to do when he came round to No. 5 the next morning; and Hardy had to air his room, and burn pastils in it, for forty-eight consecutive hours.

The next issue of the “Nipper” contained

a descriptive "poem" (which all but twelve fellows laughed over), entitled *Gloria Sophomorum FUMUS*,— which, being freely interpreted, signifieth "Sophomoric smartness ends in smoke."

CHAPTER VI.

A LONG DAY, WITH AN ADVENTURE.

And the unthought-on accident is guilty
Of what we wildly do.—WINTER'S TALE.

THE winter and spring of Freshman year came and went. Nicholas Hardy continued to inquire for knowledge, and Mrs. Hinnipick to inquire for her son. On the first occasion, since the arrival of the summer days, that the good lady happened to want to know if anybody had "seen Sidney," Nick and several of the other boarders promised her, in pleasant jest, that they would charge their minds with the young man's case, and "look him up."

"Hardy speaks with a good deal of con-

fidence; I'll bet he's got him stowed away somewhere," said Hobart Whately.

"Nonsense, Bart," protested Nick; "I repel the insinuation like an honest man. If you don't believe me you may search my pockets."

"Proc," said Matt Calvin, looking severely across the table, and clearing his voice with a portentous hem,— "Proc, your blushes would intimate (whereupon Proc swelled up and grew redder than ever), would intimate that you know more about this matter than you should. Have you got Sidney over there, and are you sitting on him?"

Proc exploded with his customary cackle, and jumped up and made a great show of looking in and under his chair. Then quite a general investigation of chairs followed, and one roguish Freshman looked into the sugar-bowl. Failing to find Sidney anywhere about the dinner-table, the company

promised Mrs. Hinnipick that they would continue the search at another time, and over a somewhat wider range.

Mrs. Hinnipick had long made up her mind that she had a droll set of boys to deal with, but she liked them for all that, and being now well wonted to their ways, none of their waggery and fun offended her, even when (as to-day) it might seem to be a little at her expense. Sidney had been missing since shortly after tea-time the day before. Mrs. Hinnipick imagined that he might have spent the night at the Lasalle House, where he was to have performed with a "select" company of musicians at a soiree, and would probably have to play very late; but she thought he should have been at home to dinner. The young man was doubtless very busy, the students suggested. A "young artist," with his fortune to make, must expect to have his hands full,

and not always be able to command his time. So they consoled her.

That fine afternoon, the weather being rather warm, candor compels me to say that the fellows in Nick's division did not "rush" their Livy very brilliantly, and they were no exception to the rest of the class.

Harry Weatherbee translated "*multis ante tempestatibus*" "many storms ago," and the tutor brought him to a sudden halt. Billy Dickinson undertook the same passage, and fizzled on "*jam tum*" at the set-off. Conrad Phelps tried three times before he could give the principal parts of "*insidior*;" and Bob Burns made a "dead flunk" on the story of Remus and the robbers. All which, considering the general good record of the reciters, and the fact that the lesson was only a review, was sufficiently discouraging. But the tutor kept his temper excellently,

remembering sundry flat days in his own Freshman experience; and even when, at a critical moment in poor Tibby Dorman's grammar exercise, a *mouse* ran across the floor, causing a breeze of mirth, he only quietly rallied them for making such a "ridiculous muss,"* thereby raising the titter to a full-grown laugh. Proc would have been in his glory then, if he could have been certain that he would not be called up. Dreading this, he sat sidewise with crossed legs, "cribbing" his grammar questions out of the book hidden behind his knee, (a frequent habit with Proc, I am sorry to say.) On one side of him on the recitation bench, in the old alphabetical order, always sat Conrad Phelps, and on the other side Tom Pullen. As he bent over, intent on

* A pun on *ridiculus mus*, from a line of Horace—*mus* meaning "mouse."

his stolen studies, his position tautened his white linen coat across his round back as tightly as a stocking over a darning-egg, and Conrad, with sly penknife ready in his hand, improved the opportunity to snip a stitch in the centre seam. If Proc happened to sit the other way, Tom, also with sly penknife ready, performed similar surgery on another stitch. On this occasion they followed it up so industriously that when finally the sharp call of the tutor brought Proc to his feet, like the shock of a galvanic battery, there was a gap in his coat two inches long. Of course this would be discovered by to-morrow, and nicely sewed up, and the boys would cut it again. Tom and Conrad seemed to owe that old white coat a particular grudge.

Proc's talents did not develop very strongly in the line of scholarship, as the reader has probably guessed already, and when the

tutor asked him to state "the uses of the imperfect subjunctive," it was not exactly a surprise to see him hopelessly stuck.

"Is it used in the protasis, or apodosis—or both?" questioned the gracious tutor, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Yes, sir," gasped Proc, utterly bewildered and out at sea. And the choke of class-room merriment that greeted his "rush," and the sight of his apoplectic cheeks as he sat down, would have been painful but for a timely sensation outside that justified a loud guffaw from the whole division. At that instant a hand-organ grinder (probably hired by some rascally Sophomore) planted his instrument directly under the window, and began to wheeze forth the entrancing strains of "Old Dog Tray."

The good-natured tutor endured it as long as he could, patiently endeavoring to bring

back the attention of the class to the lesson. But it was useless; and as the hour was nearly out, rather than attempt to drive the troublesome minstrel away, he closed the recitation.

Mrs. Hinnipick's inquiries at tea-time were more anxious than ever, for Sidney was still missing. To humor her, and partly to make amends for their sport at noon, about which they now began to have some misgivings, Hardy, Calvin, and Whately said that when they took their customary after-supper stroll they would make it in their way to call at the Lasalle House.

They started in even more than college boys' usual spirits, and marched arm-in-arm down University Street, keeping step to the music of "Shool," and "Saddle up the old gray horse." There were six of them, three more having joined the original party, and

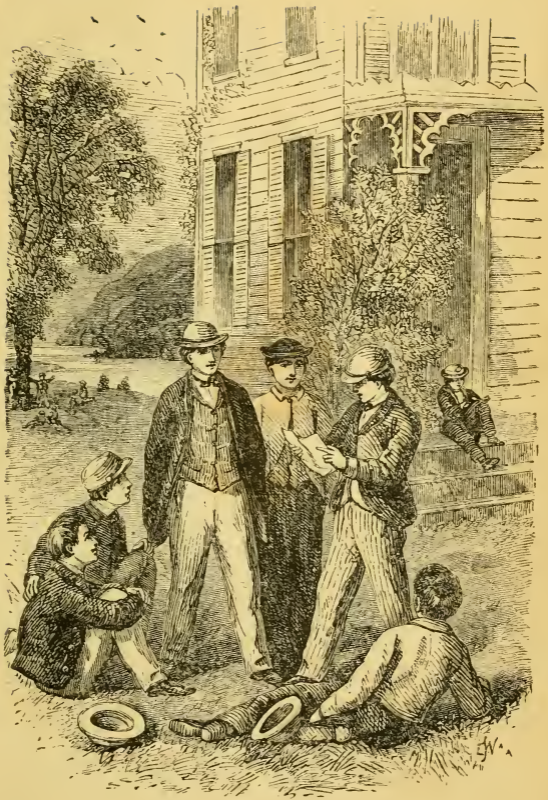
every one had something special at heart that evening to make him merry. Hardy's name had been read at chapel prayers as the successful competitor for the Bentham Latin Prize; Calvin had drawn, by rare good luck, the best second-year choice of rooms in the "barracks," as old South Central was called; Whately had found out that Kate Devereaux, a young lady in Park Avenue Seminary, called him the handsomest fellow in his class; Will Sampson had got rid of an uncomfortable chum; Charley Durkee had received notice of his election to the Mozart Singing Club; and Proc, on whom no trouble sat heavily or long, and who would have been no happier if he had "floored" everything in Livy recitation that afternoon, had just got a letter from home with fifty dollars in it.

Besides these personal felicities, the thought of Presentation Day soon to come,

when all their class would be promoted to Sophomore seats in the Chapel, and

“Freshmen be no more,”

operated, more or less consciously, to make them “feel good,” and let off their feelings in tuneful sounds. Turning into Meeting Street, they passed thence down Linden, singing all the way; and by that time they had exhausted the “Old Gray Horse,” and struck up the more tumultuous “Upidee.” Louder and louder the swelling bars of the noisy chorus surged along, Charley Durkee’s fine tenor always leading, till the “ya, ya, ya!” that ever and anon broke the rise and fall of the melody, rang like an Indian war-whoop. Suddenly the song ceased; all stood startled to see a horse running away with two ladies. Only the moment before they had noticed a stylish pony-wagon turn into Linden Street from Riverway, and it was when directly opposite the party of students





that the little horse had broken into a frightened gallop.

“It’s our singing that did it,” said Nick.
“Too bad!”

And they all set off at the top of their speed to follow the flying team. Fortunately for the safety of the terrified passengers, the horse did not turn any corners, nor did the woman who drove entirely lose her control of the reins. It was a furious run, but a short one. A one-sided pull on the bit threw the excited animal upon the sidewalk; there was a crash of glass; one of the thills of the pony-wagon had plunged through the window of a drug-store. The horse’s career was stopped, and he stood unhurt, but trembling.

The next instant the students were on the spot pouring forth apologies, and inquiring anxiously after the damage done. The elderly lady, who seemed to be the

owner of the team, had fainted, or so nearly so (with her fright) that she was pale and helpless; and this proved to be the worst result of the "accident." The firmer-nerved Abigail, who attended her, and who had held the reins, was a good deal shaken up, but was quite able to answer questions, and to care for her mistress, while others held the horse. She declined the druggist's proposal to assist the lady into his store, saying that it would be her wish to drive home as soon as possible. Accordingly some smelling-salts and a bottle of bay-rum were brought, and the application of these soon recovered the lady sufficiently to sit up without support.

"There, Martha, we'll go home now," she whispered.

Nicholas stepped to the side of the wagon and touched his hat. "Are you not afraid, madam? Wouldn't you like a man to drive your horse?" he asked.

He had made a rapid estimate of the injury to the window and to the team, seeing that the women were not seriously hurt, while Proc and Whately soothed and petted the pony, a handsome sorrel with thin nostrils and delicate ears that played back and forth like the talking fingers of a deaf-mute.

“It is the least we can do, after the fright and trouble we have caused you,” added Nicholas, noticing some hesitation on the part of the occupants of the wagon.

“To tell the truth, I do feel a little weak and nervous myself,” said the woman “Martha,” with a faint laugh, looking suggestively at the mistress. Then, turning to Nicholas, “Will you —”

“Certainly, madam,” replied he, and without more delay he proceeded to fulfil his office, the acceptance of which, probably, his gentlemanly manners had done more than anything else to decide.

“Settle for the glass, boys,” he said as he took the reins, “and, understand, you assess me for my share;” and as he drove away, Proc and Whately joined the rest of the party who had been making terms with the owner of the broken window.

“209 Savin Street” was the place to which our friend Hardy was directed to go. It proved to be a very pleasant though rather quaint residence almost in the suburbs; and by the time he arrived there with his company he had learned that it belonged to Miss Tabitha Magraw, the elderly lady to whom chance and his own courtesy had made him temporary coachman. He gallantly assisted his charge into the house, though she now stood in little need of attention, and was making his polite adieus, and expressing his hopes for her health and comfort, &c., when the lady hinted that she would like to know who he was. He handed her his card, and

bowed himself out, but to his surprise the woman Martha called after him before he reached the gate, and told him her mistress insisted that he should stay and eat strawberries and ice-cream. Rather reluctantly (for he was anxious to get back to his room) Nick complied, and was waited on into the drawing-room. As he entered, directly before him, seated at the piano with a genteel-looking young damsel, who should he see but Mrs. Hinnipick's interesting son, the missing Sidney!

That young man looked rather sheepish, but remembered himself sufficiently to introduce "Miss Margaret Granger, one of my pupils," to "Mr. Hardy, of the Class of —, an old friend of mine;" so that our hero found himself on a double footing in the family before he fairly had time to take in the situation, for Miss Margaret was Miss Tabitha Magraw's niece.

“A funny *denouement* this!” thought he. “Half an hour ago I am walking down Linden Street, singing ‘Upidee,’ and, presto! here I am two miles away, a guest in one of the mansions of ‘the quality’! How’s a fellow to account for himself if this is the way he is to be whisked about? Well, I’ve found Sidney, any way; and I’ll take the youngster to his mother.”

Presently a colored servant brought in the ices and strawberries (the latter from Miss Magraw’s own garden), and the three sat down together to the little banquet. Sidney appeared quite at home in the house, and Hardy could see plainly enough how matters stood between him and the young lady.

“*You* were not brought here quite so unexpectedly as *I* was, I fancy,” he said, glancing mischievously from the young man to his fair companion; and then, to save

embarrassment, he immediately took up another subject. Miss Margaret was sociable, rather gushing, in fact, and the conversation soon became amusing enough to all concerned to make them forget the absence of the hostess. Miss Margaret was called out for a moment to speak to a girl acquaintance who had merely stopped for a threshold errand, and as she disappeared Sidney said, "Keep this quiet, will you, Hardy? If the fellows find out, you know. I suppose mother has been asking after me, as usual; but you see I had to —"

"Spare your secrets, Sid," interrupted Nick. "This is none of my business. If you get home to-night, no doubt it will be all right."

And in a moment more the young lady returned, accompanied by Miss Tabitha.

As the new guest seemed to be the chief object of Miss Tabitha's attention, Sidney

and Margaret shortly withdrew to the veranda, leaving Hardy and the hostess alone. Immediately that lady, dropping small-talk, took out the card he had given her, read his name on it aloud, and looked at him as if she had something on her mind.

“Was your grandmother’s maiden name Lyman?” she suddenly asked.

Nicholas was a little staggered at the bluntness of the question. He replied that he was not *au fait* on family matters so far back, but that to the best of his hearsay recollection his father’s mother *was* a Lyman. What could the old lady be driving at? he thought.

“My ancestor, who came from Ireland,” continued Miss Tabitha Magraw, “had a daughter (the name was spelled McRagh then) who married a Lyman. *Their* daughter was your grandmother. I had heard that she married a Hardy, but I did not

only an accident, some nervous freak of the good creature, and not the singing at all, for he was well enough used to college noises, and surely the chance that had so curiously brought two "double cousins" together ought not to be regretted.

Nicholas walked home with Sidney, lecturing him by the way, half seriously, on his habits of mysterious absence. He reported nothing of what he had seen, or of the young fellow's attraction at the Magraw house, but it leaked out after a while, and then the merciless boarders parodied the old primer rhyme and set it to "Cocachelunk."

"Little lambkin, silly ranger,
 Keep your pasture safe and sure:
 Rambling only leads to *Granger*
 Such as you can ne'er endure."

CHAPTER VII.

A SPLURGE, AND A LAW-CASE.

A Babylonish dialect

Which learned pedants much affect.

It was a party-colored dress

Of patched and piebald languages.

'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin

Like fustian heretofore on satin. — HUDIBRAS.

TERM bills, board-bills, fuel-bills, book-bills, tailors' and shoemakers' bills, college fees and other fees, society assessments, secret-society expenses, boating expenses, campaign taxes, occasional oyster-spreads, miscellaneous incidentals, — it was truly a formidable column of items that stared Hardy in the face at the end of Freshman year; and by the time the annual electioneering was

over (during which he worked with all his pluck and will) there was not enough left of his Hightown earnings to last him till Thanksgiving recess. Hereafter he must study the art of retrenchment, as well as the other arts. He wished he had begun that kind of study a little sooner. In fact, when he thought over the matter seriously, he saw where he could have saved nearly two hundred dollars, without any injury to his health or his social standing in his class. That sum would have to go down in the Experience account — the big ledger where most college boys are obliged to set a good many sorry balances.

However, our friend Nick was not entirely unprovided for. He was of age now, and could use the proceeds of the little "live-stock" investment started for him in his childhood by the kindness of old Jerry Thorpe the drover, and Uncle Ben James.

This amounted to nine hundred dollars; and by cutting off the "sundries," and abating some of the rip and tear in the athletic department, and driving sharper bargains with "good-fellowship," and shutting down the "pocket-money" waste-gate, he would be able to make that sum go a long way. He decided not to join a Sophomore secret society, preferring to put a strain on his popularity (if it came to that) rather than on his means; and as to the popularity, his election to the vice-secretaryship of the Athenics (an office in the line of high promotion) gave him reason to be well satisfied on that score. At all events he would hold up his head and pay his debts; and if on the one hand he could not afford to drudge for a university "scholarship," or submit to receive the endowment gratuities allowed to indigent students, on the other hand he was willing to own that he could not afford the expense

of billiards, treats, club suppers, private theatricals, or "pow-wow" masquerades.

Setting out on his Sophomore career with these resolutions, young Hardy had a clear field before him, and asked no favors. He stuck to his studies, aiming all the time to build broad rather than to climb high; and at the rate of work he prescribed for himself he found margin for a good deal of reading and volunteer discipline.

During the latter part of the winter he gained one first prize in English composition, and entered the lists of the annual Athenic Prize Debate. The theme chosen for the forensic strife was "Personal Beauty—the result of mental rather than physical culture." The preparation engaged a variety of talent, Hardy representing the extreme common-sense element among the disputants, and Marshall McCracken the bombastic extreme. The selection of sides too, on the debate, by

these right and left men, was as odd and striking as the difference of their characters. Hardy, a broad-shouldered athlete, defending the glories of mind, and McCracken, a slender dandy, vaunting the glories of muscle, suggested a lion and a circus-pony exploiting in swapped skins. The *orators* in the contest were Hal Stanley and Willard Faunce, and right well they performed their part when the time came. But my reader's interest will naturally centre in the speeches of McCracken and Hardy; and I am bound to say that these made the greatest sensation. Stanley and Faunce were eloquent, and each was heartily applauded for "a downright good thing;" but Hardy was original, and McCracken was ridiculous, so that when *they* talked the cheers came in pretty much anywhere. Talked! That was no name for the performance of the dandy disputant on Prize Debate night. Athenic Hall was full, for

everybody expected a treat when McCracken should spread himself. As he stepped forward to take his turn, faultless as his tailor could make him, in white vest, black pants and "swallow-tail," dove-colored neck-tie, and kid—yes, he had actually taken off but *one* of his white kid gloves!—a tempest of clappings hailed him, so obstreperous and so prolonged that for some little time it was impossible for him to begin. McCracken's self-conceit was as inordinate as his rhetoric, and it was this that gave point and richness to the joke of such a welcome, for the simpleton accepted the applause as proof of popular favor and genuine admiration, and bowed right and left with all the *impressment* of a Brignoli.

"MR. President—Gentlemen of the Committee of Award," he said, as soon as the throng had ceased their salute, and begun to wait for him,— "I stand in this arena to-

night as the champion of that noble and exquisite art by whose potent magic the white hands of celestial Hygeia braid the thews of Strength and Stature, and summon to smiling life the miraculous charms of the human face divine; that art which in the ancient stadium and gymnasia of Greece developed the heroic gods, and the voluptuous forms of the nymphs and naiads of the classic age; that art whose plastic triumphs gave to the wizard pencil of Apelles its beatific inspirations, and created the transcendent perfections and splendid archetypes which supplied models to the thaumaturgic chisels of Phidias and Praxiteles; that art, gentlemen, supplementary of all arts,—the Spartan school of health, the Olympian drill of motion, the ultimate minister of æsthetic delight, the prime factor and foster of corporeal loveliness, the glorious, the sublime,

the imperial, the magnificent art of E-X-E-R-C-I-S-E ! ”

The student audience — seniors, juniors, sophomores, and freshmen together — all listened with about equal appreciation to this opening splurge. The oldest of them had never heard the origin of the Greek gods and goddesses accounted for in just that way, but the speaker's magniloquent description, as well as his thrilling attitude and tones, and gestures, and general style of doing it, wrought them up to a high pitch of feeling, and the wonderful stroke of rhetorical skill with which the boy contrived to pack the biggest part of his argument into his exordium was beyond all praise of words. However, they managed to hold on to themselves till he had stated his subject, and then their mocking applause broke forth with such energy and uproar that he had to stop, and bow his acknowledgments again.

Every gracious bend of his dapper person, and finally the majestic sweep of his white glove, commanding silence, of course made the fellow's conceit more ridiculous, and the fun more excruciating. From that time till his speech was done it was only the occasional desire of the audience to get hold of a fresh specimen of bombast, to make sport of, that secured him any hearing at all. The demonstrations were "parliamentary," too, no hooting, and no very boisterous stamping, or banging of canes, being allowed, as in class-meetings; even the laughter, at least the loudest of it, was mostly confined to the Freshmen and Sophs, the general understanding being to burlesque a dignified approval just far enough to keep up the farce, in which McCracken was playing chief, under the delicious delusion that he was making himself the most popular man in college. He went on (when he could) swing-

ing his arms and swaying his swallow-tails to emphasize his fluent periods, and pronouncing his words with the crisp assurance and smart precision of a circus manager advertising his performing elephants.

“ Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Committee of Award: As the kingly cedar, or the god-like palm, growing grandly towards the empyrean blue, gathers vigor from its wrestling with the fourfold blasts of circumambient heaven, and stiffens its swelling bulk in the frigid rigors of hibernal cold, and indurates its unvestured limbs, and sweetens its aspiring sap, under naked solstitial suns and mellifluous nocturnal dews, till, crowned with consummate splendor and grace, it waves its emerald locks and charms with its matchless fairness the wishful traveller from afar; so, by the discipline of *physical culture*, the sacred human form [burst of hand-clappings checked by the president’s

gavel] conquers adorning favors from all the contributory elements, thrives Anteus-like from the earth, and wins from infinite air and sun the thousand chameleon-dyes of beauty, till shape, and face, and feature, ravishingly perfect, enchant the enraptured eye, and witch the world with admiration and love." [Thunder-peals of applause and merriment that shook the walls, and lasted full two minutes and a half.]

The *ne plus ultra* of hifalutin was reached when the gushing young orator grew sentimental. The mingling of pathos and bathos was altogether overwhelming.

"Go with me, Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Committee of Award, into the great metropolis, and behold the fair beings whose presence glorifies [loud laughter] its bustling fanes of business, and its haunts of perspiring toil. Visit the graceful priestesses of the great hotel-kitchens [derisive

applause], the radiant muses of the vast factories and work-shops [increased commotion], the queens of the laundry, and the goddesses of the bakery and confectionery! [Deafening applause and smothered interjections of "good, good!"] Maidens poor and portionless, but strong with enforced muscular exercise, undisguised by meretricious charms of sparkling jewelry or gaudy opulence of dress, you shall see them beautiful as Cleopatra or Trojan Helen [great applause], with cheeks fresh and pure as the dewy air of early morn [vociferous applause], with eyes like stars, and teeth like pearls, and lips like Cupid's bow [uproarious applause and mirth]. Their movements are nature's voiceless poetry, and their smile is like the sunburst that limns the rainbow on the orient sky [frantic applause and laughter]. Health bounds in their veins, and sweet contentment rests like a dove in their

innocent hearts, making merry music bubble from their lips like ripples of bird-song from the nightingale-haunted groves of Shiraz." [General breakdown, in which the chairman himself loses the last remnant of his gravity.]

There was more (and worse) of the like swell-rhetoric before the inflated Sophomore exhausted his gas. But we have had enough of Marshall McCracken's splurge. I scarcely need say that when he had finished, and made his last sweeping bow to one of the most wildly responsive audiences that ever ridiculed a fool, he sat down with the firm conviction that he had made the greatest hit of his life.

As all the speeches were prepared beforehand, and committed to memory, anything like a direct *reply* to an opponent (without previous arrangement) was impossible in the debate; so that it would have been out of order to answer Bombastes McCracken, even

if he had said anything worth answering. But when Hardy, whose turn came next, rose to commence his argument, and remarked, with a lingering twist of drollery in his recently straightened face, that he did not propose to waste time in "pinchbacking gold or pumpkin-lanternizing the sun and moon," many felt a strong temptation to suspect that he had volunteered a little beyond his manuscript. He would call things by their right names, he said, and he severely criticised the gross fashion of defining personal beauty from the merely animal standpoint. Beauty was not *prettiness*, considered as a result of *any* kind of "culture." Prettiness was an accident. It was accordingly to be thrown out of this discussion entirely. The question contemplated personal beauty as a perfection; as the flower of a growth; as the summit glory of *generations* of improvement. He reminded his judges of the

significance of the old mythology which makes Venus herself the daughter of Jove and Dione (the divine one), and of the name "Urania" (heavenly), by which Plato, the sublimest of philosophers, called her. Beauty was a divine idea. Only by thought-culture (the exercise of the divine faculty in man) did it become embalmed in art; but the same thought's *first* results had already realized it in nature. The Grecian golden age of human beauty was when that land was the world's intellectual school.

He went on to compare the average form and face of the intellectual nations with the same as seen in the ignorant but athletic nations, showing in a few very fine sentences how the Gothic conquests (victories of mere brute strength) became victories of beauty only by absorbing the culture of the subjected tribes. Passing from races to individuals, he portrayed the effects of mental

discipline on the countenance and person; the subtile harmony, and brilliant depth, and exhaustless variety of the charms of that beauty to which inward education has given a living soul, its superiority to animal prettiness, and the far more *enduring* character of its graces.

“Time has small power

O'er features the mind moulds. Their beauty lasts

As fragrance lingers where a rose hath been;

As silenced music echoes on the wind;

As suns gone down leave twilight on the sky.”

In answer to the narrow theory that must needs account for all physical beauty in some physical cause, Hardy grew keenly humorous and “brought down the house” by citing in choicest sarcasm the case of “the handsome thief” (then freshly notorious from his recent trial and sentence at the County House in New Harbor), who “lived a little inside his income and a little outside his

means," and had never done or been taught to do a day's work since he was born. "Physical culture!" exclaimed Nick, straightening himself with ironical indignation, — "here is a man, in face and form a perfect Apollo, over whom at his trial all the girls ran silly wild, but who from a boy was too constitutionally tired to put forth a single honest effort, and whose father and mother in this regard were prototypes of himself. And yet we are asked to believe that *physical culture*, personal or ancestral, must have made that splendid thief and pickpocket! Why, the fellow is so intolerably lazy that he will never exert himself so much as to straighten a rope till he straightens the one the sheriff finally puts around his neck! No, gentlemen, the negative can afford to give our theory the credit of that rascal's beauty. What made Bill Brian handsome was *living by his wits!*"

And, considering that no *moral* conditions entered into the question at issue, the irony was well put.

There was laughter and hand-clapping enough while Hardy spoke; but there was no more *ridicule*. No one better than he could transport an audience from mockery to serious meaning, and make them *like* it. And when he wound up his argument with a stirring passage which illustrated the pre-eminence of beauty begotten in the intellect by the legend of Athena (the patron goddess of the society), springing from the brain of Olympian Jupiter, the genuine applause for him was quite as noisy as the sham applause had been for McCracken.

I have no space to notice the indifferent speakers in the debate, who went in merely to improve themselves, and with no expectation of a prize; nor to describe Faunce's strength or Stanley's splendor. The per-

ration of the latter's speech, which was on Hardy's side, led on by perfect climax, as only a born orator could do it, to the apt lines of Akenside with which he ended:

“Mind, mind alone (bear witness earth and heaven),
The living fountains in itself contains
Of beauteous and sublime: here hand in hand
Sit paramount the graces; here enthroned,
Celestial Venus, with divinest airs,
Invites the soul to never-fading joy.”

It only remains to say that the affirmative won the debate, and that Hal Stanley and Nick Hardy took the first and second prizes. No one was dissatisfied with the decision except Marshall McCracken. No one had any reason to be except perhaps Willard Faunce, but he was too much of a man to show any ill-humor. McCracken was astonished at his defeat; and then he got into high dudgeon about it. The boys said it made him “hard;” for very soon

afterwards he took to wearing tom-cat moustaches and smoking long nines.

Bow-wow-wow-wow! woh! woh!

“Shoot that Fred Drummond’s dog!” And up went the window with a bang.

Half a dozen Sophomores had adjourned to Hardy’s room (now in the second story) after the Prize Debate, to congratulate him, and have a fresh laugh over McCracken’s great splurge. The dog that had disturbed them by his moonlight latrations belonged to a very innocent Freshman who lodged on Traverse Street just back of the college buildings; and this was by no means the first time that the said dog had excited the vengeful wrath of students who roomed within ear-shot of his bark. That the brute still lived to bark was a wonder, for his destruction had been solemnly decreed more

than once, as likewise the exemplary punishment of the childlike Freshman who had the fatuity to think of keeping a dog at college. As Hardy had no such dangerous things as fire-arms in his possession, the proposal to shoot the offending beast could not be carried out, and after hurling a boot-jack and several bottles through the window, the company suspended hostilities and held a council of war.

“Let’s have him up before the Areopagus!” suddenly exclaimed Matt Calvin; and the idea was hailed with a shout of general approval, nobody stopping to inquire whether Calvin meant the Freshman or the dog.

Great was the consternation of poor Fred Drummond on the following evening to find himself confronted in his study by two tall “lictors,” who summoned him, in a long rigmarole full of tremendous words, to appear forthwith at the bar of the Court of Areopagus, there to make answer before the



great Kantankerus Judex to the charge of violating the Nuisance Act; and then marched him solemnly up to one of the rooms in North Central. Passing inside, he saw a tribunal in waiting, and all the paraphernalia of a criminal trial, that gave him dim suggestions of the Inquisition and Star Chamber. The judge sat on an elevated chair, and ranged before him and about the room stood several other "lictors," five "accusatores," and on either side of the door a savage-looking "carnifex," each with an axe in his hand. Over the judge's head hung a picture, drawn with charcoal on a huge cardboard, of an axe, and a dog with his tail cut off behind his ears. The chief lictor "called" the court, and amid awful silence an accusator read:

"Plaintiff Henricus Sangfrodo against Fredericus Drummond complaineth for that, whereas, said Drummond, defendant, here-

tofore, to wit, residing in the city of New Harbor, at No. 10 Traverse Street, did wrongfully and injuriously keep a certain dog, the said defendant well knowing that said dog was used and accustomed to bark continuously by day and by night, and that on Tuesday, the 13th instant, the said defendant did then and there allow said dog to bark continuously from early in the day through the whole day and night following, and did thereby hinder and prevent plaintiff from transacting his lawful affairs and business by day, and deprived him of his sleep during the night, so as injuriously to affect his health and peaceful enjoyment of his property, and to the damage of the plaintiff to the amount of one hundred dollars — ”

By this time the unlucky Freshman was hopelessly bewildered, and his head was all in a whirl. One impression, however, doubly distinct by sound and vision, re-

mained before his mind. It was "dog, *dog*, DOG." It seemed to him as if everybody in the room was saying "dog." He kept a dog, and surely something terrible was going to be done about it. Even the adjuration "So help you Balbus," when they "swore" him, did not discover to his wandering wits that a farce was being played. He sweated and stuttered through a long, severe examination, after which the great Kantankerus Judex (it was big Heman Timothy himself) in a pompous voice ordered that the dog should "be killed, or effectually and forever removed," and that the defendant should sign a contract and deposit a lock of his hair as security that it should be done. Drummond, all in a dubious daze, felt himself forced through these ceremonious formalities, and then the two "carnifices" seized what there was left of him, blindfolded him, walked him down-stairs, across the Campus, and

around two squares, then through a door, where they left him under a stern injunction not to remove the bandage from his eyes till he had recited the eleven axioms in the first book of Euclid. When the exhausted Freshman could see again he found himself in his own room.

Hardy (who played second "carnifex" in the Areopagus business, and, besides, got up the legal indictment that the "accusator" read) had no taste or disposition for bullying Freshmen, and the court-trial transaction was the nearest he ever came to taking part in anything like "hazing." As to that affair he was inclined to think that the end justified the means. The dog was never heard from, or heard of afterwards.

When Hardy returned to his room that night (after three hours' absence), he found a letter tucked under his door. It was from Miss Tabitha Magraw.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH NICK "ASSISTS" AT A KETTLE-DRUM.

Chide me not, laborious band,
 For the idle flowers I brought;
 Every aster in my hand
 Goes home loaded with a thought.

EMERSON.

THE letter which Hardy found slipped under his door contained an invitation — in fact, a rather warm *request* — for him to attend "the Quarterly Fair-hope Kettle-drum," at No. 209 Savin Street, that day evening, one week.

Nick made no doubt that the note had come to him by Sidney's hands, as he bethought him that Mrs. Hinnipick at tea had again propounded the inevitable inquirv

about her son, and been partially comforted by her boarders' confident suggestion that the young Romeo was lingering where his Juliet dwelt. Indeed, it was solely Sidney's long tarries at this place, and the occasional amusing references provoked thereto at table, that had kept Miss Tabitha Magraw in our hero's remembrance at all. It was so long now since the affair of the runaway horse, that he would otherwise have entirely forgotten the adventure, and all parties concerned in it; for Sidney, dreading to put new material into the hands of his tormentors at home, had never told that he was a fellow-boarder, and Miss Tabitha had not broken silence,—and she had now found out only by accident how directly she could communicate with her “double cousin.”

Hardy, soon after his involuntary visit to the Magraw house, had learned what little the outside world knew of Miss Tabitha,—

not from the timorously secretive Sidney, but from his companions of the evening walk on Linden Street. The druggist who owned the broken window had guessed who she was, and volunteered to them some information; and it appeared that among former classes, when her neat but noticeable turnout used to be seen almost daily passing the college buildings, she was always known as "the countess." Of course Nick's companions caught up the title, and (so long as the novelty of his adventure lasted) continued to din him with it, and with the "great expectations" he had probably come into, till he privately consigned the hero business — and the "countess" herself — to the list of intolerable bores. The excitements of the closing term, and engagements during summer vacation, which kept him from coming in contact with Squire Gammel or old Dr. Norcross, put the whole matter of Miss Tab-

itha and her wonderful family revelations out of his mind. During the months since Sophomore year began he had not happened to catch a glimpse of her on the street, in pony-wagon or sleigh. He had long ceased to think there was any reason for expecting to renew her acquaintance, much less to receive a letter from her.

The message tucked under his door puzzled him — particularly one expression in it about desiring his “presence and *assistance*.” He had attended one kettle-drum party, a rather elegant affair, designed, it seemed to him, for match-making mammas to introduce their daughters, and for which it cost him considerable to dress himself up; and he had concluded that, until he was a Senior at least, and had more leisure, he should not go to any more. And here was an invitation sent him not only to be present, but to *assist* at a kettle-drum!

His first impulse was to write a regret, and dismiss the subject; but second thoughts convinced him that he could not afford to decline without giving any reason. Miss Tabitha was not a "match-making mamma," nor a match-making aunt, either, for, by the looks of things, her niece was already provided for. His "assistance" could not be wanted in that direction. He put the note aside for further consideration. The end of it was that he thought better of the party, and *went*.

A quiet surprise awaited Hardy's arrival at No. 209. When he entered the parlors, nerved and armed to meet a battery of jewelled beauty, and to face the music of a chime of belles, and saw twenty or thirty poor women seated in groups, sewing and knitting, or learning to sew and knit, a spasm of self-ridicule relaxed him so suddenly that

he almost forgot his politeness. Sidney could probably have told him what a "Fair-hope Kettle-drum" was like, if he had not stood too much on his dignity to ask the youngster. The fact was that a small association of wealthy and beneficent ladies, under the name of the "Fair-hope Band," of which Miss Tabitha was the head-centre, made their rendezvous at the Magraw house once in three months, to give the ignorant and hard-worked mothers of the lowly class, whom their kindness had been helping and teaching, a little cheerful entertainment, and a new quarter's God-speed. Hardy noticed how their worn faces kindled while Miss Margaret Granger played sweet airs for them on the piano (and for a wonder Sidney was not there to watch her execution and turn the music-leaves), and how delighted they looked while their gentle teachers, the ladies of the "band," praised their work, or unrolled small

parcels of cloth which were to be their material for future efforts at home. At a single glance he so far comprehended everything that he could respond with tolerable composure to Miss Tabitha's welcome.

"It is quite a long time since we saw each other," she said, smilingly shaking hands. "But I have remembered you, and I believed you were the kind of man not to be offended at an invitation to such a gathering as this."

Hardy assured her that she was entirely correct in her judgment of him, and that he was heartily at her service. He was prepared not only to find great pleasure in attending the Fair-hope Kettle-drum, but also to make himself useful, "if not ornamental."

"Ah! that was well said, and I shall put you to the test," rejoined Miss Tabitha. "You have come just in time to read to us. These tired sisters of ours have few

intellectual treats. You shall make your own selection."

And as soon as she had introduced him personally to each of the ladies of the "band," and by name to all the company, she led him to the book-table. Any one less quick at an emergency would have felt somewhat confused to be caught and harnessed in, on so short notice, to entertain a female meeting. Hardy thought of Longfellow's Psalm of Life, and inquired *sotto voce* if that "would do."

"Fresh, no doubt, to most of them, — good, if not fresh," whispered Miss Tabitha.

Whereupon, holding a book open in his hand for appearance' sake, Nicholas slowly recited the Psalm of Life to the company, from beginning to end; and being a very good elocutionist, and master of natural emphasis, he seemed to interest the educated women as much as the ignorant ones in the noble thoughts of the brave old poem.

The poor working mothers looked as if they wanted to rise up and cheer him to the echo of—

“Let us then be up and doing
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.”

Some of them had brought with them their little children, whom admiration of their surroundings kept wonderfully quiet. Apart from the real pleasure he found in his audience, the reader felt rewarded, when at the close of his little performance a venerable clergyman came in, to hear the ladies say, “You have missed a feast.” He wondered at his satisfaction in so small a thing. But there was nothing to wonder at. He was among people a part of whom were needy, and *all* of whom were sincere; and with such waiters and receivers a trifling service is more thankful than splendid offerings

to the false and overfed. Presently, while her niece and two other ladies sang an appropriate song in trio, Miss Tabitha and several of the "band" retired intent on hospitable preparations, and Hardy made the acquaintance of the aged clergyman. The supper, brought in upon trays, was very plain and substantial, consisting chiefly of coffee and nice sandwiches; and when all had been well fed, and made happy by a half-hour's sociable chat, the clergyman led in brief devotions, every one joining in the Lord's Prayer.

This was the closing exercise of the "Quarterly Fair-hope Kettle-drum," for these meetings always broke up early. It was a study to our young Sophomore (whose early privations were fresh in his recollection) to watch the grateful faces of the poor women, and listen to their low-spoken "God-bless-yous," as they went away with the bundles

of work they were to do, and with their *wages*, paid them in orders on well-known dealers, mostly for fuel and food.

By the time the affair of that evening was over he felt that he had gained a useful experience at small cost, and Miss Tabitha Magraw had risen in his estimation immensely.

When all the company had gone, that good lady, who had asked Nicholas "as a favor" to remain, apologized to him for further requiring his "assistance," and sat down with him by the fire for a confidential talk. "People call me a woman of leisure," she said, "but though I am old enough to be deeply interested in the past, you see I do not give up my interest in the present. Whatever concern I feel in the ancient matters of our family is chiefly due to the fact that I happen to possess some things which may be of service to other descendants, and which

I am unwilling should be lost at my death. Some time after you were here last summer I answered Squire Gammel's letter, giving such information as I had; and lately he has sent me another letter, containing some singular discoveries relative to the old Gartney will. This was found, it seems, in the old Hanford house, where Hiram Gartney suddenly died a century ago. I think you told me you were with the lawyer at the time this will came into his hands. Can you remember ever hearing him say *how* it was found?"

"Mysteriously resurrected from an old cabinet, just as lost wills always are," said Hardy, laughing. And then, anxious to oblige his hostess, he "put on his thinking-cap," and addressed himself seriously to the subject. He informed Miss Tabitha that he did recollect Squire Gammel's mentioning once about the finding of the will; that it was in an

ancient house in North Timlow, about five miles from Fenwick,— in the attic lumber-room,— in a — yes, he believed it really *was* an “old cabinet,” — one of those queer old treasure-traps that fancy-joiners delighted to make, generations ago, full of impossible tills and invisible panel-pockets. “That old cabinet, or secretary, or whatever you’d call it, lay among a lot of broken furniture, going to pieces or gone to pieces, and the old parchment was accidentally seen sticking through one of its cracks; and the rats had — ”

“O!” ejaculated Miss Tabitha, interrupting him with an earnest gesture. “That old secretary never rightfully belonged to the Hanfords! When I was a little girl ten years old, I remember my great-grandfather telling me about that old secretary, that Sheldon McRagh himself brought from England. It was always in the Magraw family,

and *ought* to be now. I wonder how it ever got so neglected and broken. Perhaps one of the tills contained the rest of— Well, let that go. Hiram Gartney was my great-grandfather's cousin, and there is a story that he took some wicked advantage of the Magraws during the terribly hard times before the French and Indian war. His sister's children, the Hanfords, got hold of his property, but they never prospered, and by a strange providence the will, that gave— But really, Mr. Hardy, you must be astonished to hear me run on. Your story called up some things I had lost. This correspondence only told me the will was found in the Hanford house, and gave no particulars. Pardon an old woman's excitement, and say if you remember anything more."

"Nothing more," said Nicholas, smiling, and assuring her that her excitement was excusable and perfectly natural. "But go

on, Miss Magraw. I am really curious to know what discoveries my good friend the squire has made."

"Well, to begin with, the old Hanford house has been pulled down, and — But what am I thinking of? I'll bring the letter, and read it." She brought the letter, and then, putting it into Hardy's hands, urged him to read it himself aloud. It was not long, but it certainly contained an odd piece of news. It stated that, by the suggestion of Dr. Norcross, who in correspondence with Squire Gammel had learned that the old Hanford house was to be destroyed, it had been determined to have interested parties on the spot to watch the demolition, and be witnesses to anything that might happen to be found. The old doctor conceived that the rats or mice might have torn away the dry parchment rather for bedding than for food, and if possibly there were any bits of the

old will, however small, lodged in the cran-
nies of the house, he thought it would be
a pity if the right persons should not know
it. Accordingly, the squire himself, and two
of the claimants to the Gartney property, had
repaired to North Timlow, and were present
when the old building was pulled down. A
handsome fee to the workmen, and a good
understanding with the contractor, gave them
a fair field, and during the whole process
of destruction, but especially of the upper
part, a dozen pairs of eyes were keenly alert,
looking for rats' nests and parchment rags.
Sure enough, the nests were there in abun-
dance, and, what was more to the purpose,
they found in them, and scattered behind the
wainscots, small scraps of writing to the
number of many hundreds! Not a twentieth
part of these belonged to the old will, but
when the parchment had been carefully sort-
ed from the paper, there were enough genu-

ine pieces to make a handful. An expert was hired to put these together, and the result was that the names of Nancy Lyman and Luke Hanford, each coupled with a designated bequest in money, were brought out plain, and also the mutilated sentence, “. . . give and be . . . to J . . . m . . . ie my old private e ay . . . ain.”

The squire wrote in the letter that neither the expert nor himself had been able to make anything out of this, and he therefore sent a fac-simile to Miss Magraw, for her examination and opinion. Nicholas became intensely interested in this singular story of the partial restoration of the old will. When he had finished reading he paused, to pore over the fragment in the fac-simile.

“You have not read it all,” said Miss Tabitha. He turned the sheet, and saw the postscript :

“Should you despair of finding the key

to the broken writing, I would advise you to send for Mr. Nicholas Hardy, a college student in the Sophomore class. He once saw the original will at my office, and being a young man of quick faculty, he may be able to assist you."

Miss Tabitha laughed as Nick stammered over his own praises, taken completely by surprise.

"And the young man *has* assisted me already very materially," she said.

Hardy looked at her inquiringly. "Ah! I see. You are thinking of the old secretary in the Hanford garret."

"Yes; and the French for it is —"

"*Escriptoir.*"

"There you have it. You are eyes to the blind to-night, Mr. Hardy — and you shall have your reward. This is the way I fill out the gaps in the broken writing now: 'I give and bequeath to Jeremiah Hardie my

old private *escritoir*, with all that it may contain.' ”

“Capital !” exclaimed Hardy, laughing and clapping his hands.

“None the less so from the fact that Jeremiah Hardy was your great-grandfather,” said Miss Tabitha.

“But,” said Nicholas, half puzzled, “a lawyer of Squire Gammel’s acuteness ought to have guessed out this. There was the old cabinet, right before him, as you may say.”

“O, no, Mr. Hardy. Don’t you see that, not knowing what I know, he had no clue? Wanting my clue, the finding of the will in the cabinet would rather be the very reason he would not think of finding the cabinet in the will. And now,” continued Miss Tabitha decidedly, “I shall not write to Squire Gammel. I shall *go to see* him, and to find out, if I can, what became of that old secretary. By the way, do you know any Hanfords?”

“I was thinking,” said Nicholas. “I am very sure that my old teacher — my first ‘school-ma’am,’ who taught me my letters — married a Hanford.”

“Where do they live?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, probably that can be found out,” said Miss Tabitha. “And now for my sequel. You have heard through Dr. Norcross the tradition of the ancestral spoon, — the diamond concealed in the handle, — its inheritance by the Magraws, and so forth; and you have doubtless thought it all very absurd. Well, the ancestral wooden spoon is a *fact*, as my grandfather Magraw could testify, for his father owned the old relic, and kept it as the apple of his eye. Since that date, through accident (or secret mischief, as *I* think), its full history is lost. I have little doubt that it was originally kept in a secret slide of the old cabinet-escritoir.

The diamond story has always seemed to me a legend of family vanity, for the origin of the spoon itself is told in various ways. One account relates how Captain Solomon Hardee, during his wanderings in the East, after escaping from captivity, was saved from starvation by a Tartar woman who fed him with milk from a wooden spoon; and that in grateful remembrance he afterwards had a wooden spoon made, and used the figure of it as a sort of family crest. But it is certain that some strange value always attached to this wonderful heirloom. That it once had a great diamond in its handle is, of course, *possible*, and the mysterious disappearance of the spoon may give some color of truth to the story. My grandfather found no trace of it till he was over eighty years old. Then he discovered the *bowl* — only the broken lower piece — and in a very unlikely hiding-place to be left in by “accident.” The lost

handle was never heard of again. He gave the fragment to my father, and my father gave it to me. *I have the bowl of the old Solomon Hardee spoon in my possession now, and I am going to give it to you.*"

Miss Tabitha rose and went out of the room, leaving Nick in a curious maze. She soon returned, bringing with her the wonderful relic. The piece was of some very dark kind of wood, a marvel of quaint and cunning carving, of sharper and more arrow-like pattern than an ordinary spoon-bowl, very large and smooth, and having a double-bevelled rim, and the figure of a grape-leaf nicely cut at the base of the handle-stump.

"There, Mr. Hardy," she said quite seriously, putting it into his hand. "I am the last of my line, and whether we have read the old will correctly or not, I am convinced that this belongs to you. Perhaps you will prize it for its ancestral associations; and I

advise you that your family name is no ignoble one. Your great-grandfather, Jeremiah Hardy, became a colonel in the Revolution. In his old age he came to New Harbor (as a venerable neighbor of mine has recently told me), and visited a cave at Seagate Cliff, where once, when chased by a party of British soldiers, he took refuge, and kept ten red-coats at bay for two hours, till he was rescued. His name, scratched on the rock with his bayonet, is seen there yet. Any time you care to go there—the place commands a lovely view of the bay—I will give you directions where to find the old soldier's mark."

"Well, well," thought Nick, as the gate of the Magraw house finally closed behind him, "I have had history enough given out to me to-night to furnish a week's lessons. Wonder if I should make a 'rush' if I happened to be called up on it to-morrow.

Really though, I must entertain a greater respect for Old Dr. Pliny Norcross, and his mouldy stories, after this. To think I should come so near being made an antiquary myself! Hurrah for Aunt Tabitha, anyhow,— and I'm in for a family romance — (need enough of redeeming my family, goodness knows!))

But a brisk two-mile walk in the bracing air wore off the new fascination, and when he overtook Calvin and Whately going into old North Central, Nick was quite his old self again.

“Hillo, Hardy, where from?”

“Been out playing a little — that's all.”

“Playing on what?”

“Playing on a kettle-drum with a wooden spoon.”

CHAPTER IX.

PONYING FOR BIENNIAL.

A bad horse's rider will speed as he feels;
For a spur in the head is worth two in the heels.

ANON.

HAVE you seen Proc?"

It did not happen to be "Have you seen Sidney?" that evening at Mrs. Hinnipick's table, three days before terrible "Biennial." But the parody was too good to pass without laughter and appreciative remarks. The fellows were all really anxious to know what had become of Proc. So was Mrs. Hinnipick. So was Sidney; for whoever else had made him a martyr, he had never suffered from Snickerby. Snickerby was the general favorite. And now where could he be? He

had never failed them before; for he was a good trencherman, and always manfully faced his plate. To do a breakfast, or a dinner, or a supper, at Mrs. Hinnipick's without Proc, was worse than *Midsummer Night's Dream* with Puck left out. Nobody could spare him. His absence now disturbed the harmonies fearfully. The hiatus where his cackle always came in, when anything particularly relishing was said, was actually painful.

The theories to account for him were various if not ingenious. One said that probably he wasn't hungry — an absurdity which was unanimously shouted down. One thought he had gone to the tailor's to have the rip in his coat mended. One wagered that he was down at the printing-office, hid in a swab, to gobble an examination paper. One suggested that he had eloped with the "Park Avenue Heron" (a girl a foot and a half taller than himself, for whom he had

once accidentally expressed admiration). One concluded that he had been to the Faculty and got leave of absence till Biennial was over — a supposition which, for its mountainous prodigiousness, and its sarcastic application to Proc's well-known scholarship, was of course voted the best joke of all. So the ifs and perhapses went round — guesses wholly futile and at fault every one — most of all those which ascribed the disappearance of Mr. Honorius Proctor to dishonorable causes. He was no such man.

Inquiry languished on the inconsolable boarders' lips as they dispatched their supper with impaired appetites, pining for their merriest mate.

“And scant and small the booty proved,
For Gelert was not there.”

The truth of the matter was that Proc, instead of not being “hungry,” had felt an

unusual desire to replenish his inner man, that afternoon, at the close of recitation, and not finding any one else sufficiently so inclined to bear him company, he had gone alone to a restaurant down town, and ordered mutton-chops and cold plum-pudding. The restaurant was in the second story, and seeing unoccupied the table that stood in the oriel window at the end of the saloon, a very inviting position for a warm day, Proc established himself there to enjoy his lunch, glancing now and then through the open window, and now and then down the columns of a newspaper that he found lying handy. The chops and plum-pudding proved most toothsome and filling: he was thirsty, too, and the ice-water tasted delicious; and naturally he drank a good deal. He lunched luxuriously, stopping at intervals to take up and shake a palm-leaf fan. As the last morsel disappeared from his plate, his attention wan-

dered to the newspaper again. Taking it in his hand, he lounged comfortably back, till his chair touched the low window-sill, and so sat at ease, reading and fanning off the flies. The summer air floated in, soft and balmy, under the lifted sash, wafting the soothing rustle of leaves, and the sounds of the city, mingled in a drowsy hum. Slowly the fan dropped — then the paper. Proc fell asleep, and rolled out of the window!

Now it so happened that a horse stood tied by his bridle directly under the window, and Proc, waking at the instant he pitched over the sill, and clawing wildly out to save himself, landed plump on the animal's back, and clung there like a circus monkey. The horse, which was quite a spirited one, frightened nearly to death at being pounced upon so suddenly from the air, leaped and reared with a great snort, and tearing off his head-stall, rushed out of the yard and

down the street at a speed that threatened to break his neck and run everybody down. He tossed his head, and threw his heels, and jumped over two small boys and an old woman's peanut-cart, and knocked down a hand-organ man, and flung, and flew, and cavorted, and careered, as if he was trying to dislocate himself. To dislodge his rider was out of the question, for he had more than his match on his back. Having no bridle, Proc hung to his mane with a mortal grip, and was whirled along, hatless, tousled, and red, bounding into the air every now and then so high that he almost turned a summersault, but always coming down to his seat again with the true instinct of a man whom nothing physical could beat. A madder horse, or more madly mounted, never ran,—as any one would have said who saw the sight. Truck teams reined out, carriage teams backed and dodged, small Arabs climbed the

awning-posts and squealed "hi-yah!" dogs barked, pedestrians halloed and roared, women shrieked and laughed in the same breath, good old men swung their arms and shouted "whoa!" and all the windows were stuffed with staring heads, till the four-legged hurricane and its two-legged passenger swept by out of view. The Wild Huntsman himself, blown through the city out of the Black Forest, could not have created a greater sensation. Down Meeting Street, all the way from the Common to the railway station, the terrified horse rushed with his unknown rider, vaulted the bridge with two thumps of his hoofs, wheeled the corner at the post-office, and galloped down Causeway Street, till he reached the stable where he belonged.

One can better fancy than describe the amazement of the hostlers when one of their favorite horses plunged into the livery-yard,

frantic and bridleless, and carrying a hatless Sophomore on his back! It was easy enough to "place" Proc, by the society pin on his scarf, though none of them knew his name. Word soon went to the proprietor. "'Ere's Black Sam, that Holden took out to be shod, come 'ome wì' one o' them college fellers ridin' him." And a few minutes later the proprietor was on hand to see about it. "What does all this mean?" says the man. Proc, who had dismounted and poked his hair out of his eyes, resumed as much of his dignity as he could without a hat, and told a plain, unvarnished tale. But the man laughed him to scorn, while all the stable-boys hooted and groaned.

"You don't make such a story as *that* go down with *me*," said he.

Appearances were against Proc, certainly. He was obliged to confess to himself that the whole thing was too preposterous to be

believed. It was in vain that he gave his name, and references for his good character, and protested that he told the truth. The stable-man was implacable, and the hostlers treated his words with derision. Proc was not the fellow to ask favors. His dander began to rise. He was in an awkward fix, but he would get out of it without striking his colors, or not at all.

“Where’s Holden?” inquired the stable-man.

“Dunno.”

Of course nobody knew. But at that moment Holden was making long strides in the direction of the stable, and very soon he came in. He had seen just enough of the escapade of Proc and the horse to know next to nothing about it, and to be very wrathful and unreasonable; and starting off in that frame of mind, he reached headquarters with anything but a charitable report of

the "college scamp as stole his horse, an' run away with't."

"Thought 'twas fun, didn't ye?" quoth the stable-man, looking Proc's stocky little figure grimly over. "Tim, go call a policeman."

Unluckily for our bare-headed adventurer, none of his own class had happened to be on the street to witness his crazy ride. Several members of the other classes had seen him, and a few recognized him, and two or three had run after, as far as the bridge, but noticing that the horse turned into the livery-yard, they went no further; and before Proc could arrange matters with his irate keepers, chapel prayers were over, and the students had all gone to tea.

When the "peeler" made his appearance, awful in all the glory of his official buttons, Proc told him the same story that he had told the proprietor. But that dignitary was

incredulous too; and the disgusted victim, breathing execrations on the "wooden-headed crowd," who couldn't see that a runaway adventure of a bare-headed man, on a bare-backed, bridleless horse was an *accident*, finally agreed to go to the police-station without a fuss, if somebody would lend him a hat.

He knew that he could get help enough, as soon as he could send a message to his friends; but the whole affair, and the way it came about, was so infinitely paltry and ridiculous, and such a bad joke on himself, that for some time he could not make up his mind whom to apply to, or how. Finally, failing, with all his remonstrances and explanations, to get a release "on his own recognizance," he put a bold face on, and addressed an appeal to Hardy at his boarding-club. It came to hand just as the club were leaving Mrs. Hinnipick's door, and the whole com-

pany were convulsed to hear Hardy read out aloud, —

“ Help-meats to the rescue! I am arrested for horse-stealing. Come down with credentials, and save me from the ‘jug’ !

“ Police Station No. 10. PROC.”

The next instant eight hugely tickled Sophomores were rushing off in the direction of No. 10, to deliver their lost hero out of the grasp of the “ peelers.” They arrived on the scene in an incredibly short time, and the presence of all the brass-buttoned authority in the sergeant’s office could not check their loud laughter when they entered, to see Proc, in a rakish jockey cap, standing before the desk, red and excited, holding an argument with old Jones, the restaurant-keeper! Old Jones had been puffing around for more than an hour, hunting for the “ shtudent that ordered a supper, an’ eat





it, an' jumped out o' the winder without payin' his reckonin'."

This thirty-seven-cent persecution was a trifle too much. "Look here, sir!" quoth Proc, bristling with sublime indignation, "I want to know what you've done with *my hat!* It was last seen in your saloon—a new Panama worth five dollars, sir!"

The look and attitude of the plucky little fellow, firing off this speech, upset his classmates completely, and they greeted him with staggering rounds of merriment; and it was not till the sergeant threatened to have them "*all* arrested," that they could sober down sufficiently to attend to business. Laughter proved, however, the best thing under the circumstances, for it operated as a general eye-opener. Old Jones sneaked out with his thirty-seven cents, and with the tables turned on him by one customer whose patronage he would never have again. The

'peelers" were now quite ready to listen to reason, and while Durkee, Sampson, and McFarlane hurried away to recover Proc's hat, and make everything right with the stable-men, Hardy, Calvin, and the rest staid by to answer for their friend and hear his droll story thoroughly inquired into and established. The arrival of McFarlane with the hat, and of Durkee and Sampson with Holden and his apologies, settled the case, and the comedy of errors being all untangled, policemen, students, and hostler separated with a mutual haw, haw! Meantime the news of Proc's pony adventure had reached the ears of the rest of the class. But when it flashed about that he had been *arrested*, and all the circumstances of the affair were known, the measure of fun was full, and Snickerby was unanimously voted the most amusing fellow in college.

Biennial Examination (abolished now), the great trial of scholarship occurring every other year, at which the whole course of two years' studies was reviewed, and written answers were required to lists of questions on them all, was the dreaded event of Sophomore and Senior life—more especially of the former; and, as with all things dreaded, the preparations for it were usually put off till necessity enforced them. It was a habit of the students, during the last "days of grace" to assemble in squads in the rooms of some of the better scholars of the class, and spend the night in *cramming* for the great examination.

The more unprincipled of the poor scholars of the class, too far behind to gain anything by the stuffing process, made solitary preparations to steal their passage, or held secret meetings among themselves to devise successful ways of "skinning" (smuggling text-

book leaves or stolen answers into the examination-room), and to invent new and ingenious tricks by which to "pony" themselves through.

One of the cramming assemblies was to meet in Hardy's room on the night following Mr. Honorius Proctor's bare-back ride. Hardy's interest in this was mainly one of hospitality and friendly help, as his thorough habits of study had left him in no special need to "cram" on his own account. By the hour of nine P. M. the company, including all the "Help-meat Club" (except Proc, who had locked himself up to escape an ovation) and seven others, mostly belonging to Nick's "division," had arrived with their piles of text-books, and settled down to work. By the enterprise of one of their number, a swivel urn had been borrowed for the occasion from a boarding-house near by, and this being filled with strong tea, was set upon a

table over a spirit lamp, to furnish exhilarating decoctions when needed, and fortify the drowsy against the invasions of Morpheus. It was understood that no "liquor" should be allowed.

Enter first the Mathematics,—the rule being to "begin with the hardest,"—and with much groaning and many maledictions, and free and frequent drafts upon Hardy and Bart Whately, the crammers wrestled through the manual of logarithms, and the mysteries of mantissas and "corrections."

"I'm an ass!" burst out Bill Dickinson, who had made a seven-headed and ten-horned blunder that vastly entertained the whole squad, (and Bill did manage before midnight to prove himself what he said he was.) But in the next breath he spoiled it all by adding, "And Tutor Pondright's another;" which reflection on the excellent instructor in mathematics was of course promptly rebuked.

Tea was handed round; and then came Conic Sections, next Mensuration, Trigonometry, and Geometry, and last of all Algebra, the shrewder heads of the company indicating (by some privileged guess-work of their own) the portions which the class were "most likely to be called up on."

"O, I've run my young head in a noose!"

sung Bill Dickinson, getting tired and tune-ful before the mathematics were half done. He had been growing more tuneful than intellectual ever since he came in.

"A Binomial Root I am found,
Unequal, and never can pass:
Tutor Pondright thinks me, I'll be bound,
A small geometrical ass, —

And he's another."

But by this time every man had begun to feel that cramming was work that required a little amusement in it to make it healthy.

So when Bill struck up again, Charley Durkee took the words out of his mouth, and the whole crowd launched off to the tune of "Selkirk's Soliloquy," —

"All my TRIANGLES now are obtuse,
And quite circumscribed are my SPHERES,
My COSINES are found of no use,
And my POLYGONS end — all in tears.

"My TANGENTS fly off into space,
On my SOLIDS no mortal can sup,
My ZONES are a frigid disgrace,
And my CUBE ROOTS will never come up.

"When I run my young head in a noose,
'Tis a HYPOTHENUSE, I declare,
And little can FRUSTUMS produce
In brains that of figures are bare."*

All this would have gone off smoothly enough, if noisy Bill had not run away with

* Mr. J. T. Fields will pardon the author the free and somewhat anachronistic use of his lines.

himself, and finished up the song with a whoop. There was no need to smell the fellow's breath to perceive that his mathematics for that night had stopped at the table of wine-measure. A mug of hot tea was poured down his throat, and every effort made to get him quiet. But he would not subside long. "Le's go out an' have another Burial o' Euclid!" he shouted, when the last problem had been marked, and the company were ready to take up the classics. Hardy told him there'd be a burial of Bill Dickinson if he didn't stop his noise. Whereupon Bill muttered that 'twas a good joke, and behaved himself for ten minutes, paying attention to Homer. At the end of that time he was detected paying attention to a pocket brandy-flask. His companions began to think they had humored him about long enough, but they went on translating picked passages from Homer, and Xenophon, and Thucydides,

from Livy and Horace and Sallust, Bill only interrupting with a grotesque remark now and then, and making frantic attempts to construe the words of his "pony" into the Greek or Latin text. There were several "ponies" in the crowd, for these English translations could be lawfully used to smooth a literal rendering, provided a fellow thoroughly knew his grammar and his text first. Bill knew neither text, nor grammar, nor history. "Who's this confounded Otho?" he bawled out in the middle of the skirmish with Tacitus. His stupidity served for a general laugh that drove off drowsiness better than tea could do it. If Bill had been reading the history of the last French empire in Latin, he would have wanted to know who "this confounded Napoleon III." was. Presently he was caught tipping his brandy-flask again, and being peremptorily ordered to put it up, he became more obstreperous and showed fight. Pa-

tience had ceased to be a virtue. But they bore with him, and made an attempt to cram "Alcestis." At last, when Bill broke forth on a Greek chorus, and persisted in singing it to "Cocachelunk," the fellows resolved themselves into a council of fourteen, and sentenced him to be taken out and pumped on. They seized him, and "blindfolding" his mouth to stop his profanity, carried him, despite his kicking, down stairs, and across the yard, to the college pump. Then a dozen stout hands held him fast with his head under the spout, while others equally vigorous plied the handle.

Of course matters had not been carried thus far without considerable racket, which was likely to be the more noticeable from the fact that it was now half past eleven o'clock in the night. Hardy and his party had been expecting the hall officer to make his appearance for the last hour, and now

they did not care whether he came or not. But Tutor Wilkes, who was the regulator of their section, was either too wide awake to misunderstand the cause of the noise, or too sound asleep to hear it. The fuss around the pump, and Bill Dickinson wiggling and spluttering under his *douche* bath, attracted some heads out of the old "barracks" windows, but nobody interfered. The "executioners" did their work well; and they were about to trot Bill off to his room and put him to bed, when they caught sight of a figure that they knew, and instantly a muffled explosion shook the whole squad. Proc, who never could keep the fence between him and a scuffle, had overheard the stir in the yard, and come down to see. Before he fairly knew who the actors in the performance were, seven or eight laughing and excited classmates had surrounded him and swept him off with them into North Central

south hall. They had got him at last — the man to “ride the pony,” who “couldn’t be beat;” and if time and place had been safe they would have raised a regular war-whoop round him. So, hurried to the stairway, and borne upward in gusts of half-stifled mirth, Proc rode (without saddle or bridle) to Hardy’s room.

The rest of the company, having disposed of sobered Bill, soon returned, and it is easy to say there was more fun and joking crammed in the next fifteen minutes than Latin and Greek. Proc’s afternoon experience was an inspiration of witticism and jest that left Horace and Aristophanes nowhere; and the fellows actually quaked and reeled with the laughter they dared not let out.

“Aha, Proc,” quoth Nick at last, “welcome! and a thousand thanks! We take off our hats to the lesson you taught us to-day, bare-headed and alone,— a spur in the head

is worth two in the heels. Now mount your pony, and let's all start together."

The crammers stuck to their work till three o'clock in the morning, and then disbanded.

"Now, Proc, honor bright," said Hardy aside to him, as he was going, "what *was* there in that ice-water you drank at old Jones'?"

"Well, Hardy, to be honest about it," whispered Proc, "I did drink a glass of ale; and I'll be thrashed if I ever do it again!"

And Proc never did.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH NICK HAS LONGINGS.

“If lineal virtues last, and if
Death hides lost greatness but in trust,
My sires who looked on yonder cliff
Preserve my promise in their dust.”

SO Nick Hardy wrote under one of the trees of beautiful Collingwood, a large, almost manorial, estate in the highlands of New Harbor, through whose groves and grounds meditative students loved to stroll and rest.

It was a rare thing to find Hardy poetizing; but “Biennial” was over, and having been appointed Junior orator for “Statement of Facts” next fall, he had wandered out to Collingwood alone, on one of term-time’s easy remaining days, to begin the plan of his

speech for that occasion, and jot down some early thoughts. Pausing on a shaded knoll, from which a sweep of prospect opened to the west, he had caught a distant sight of Sea-gate Cliff, and before he was aware he fell a-dreaming over what the old "countess" had told him, and for the moment lost all recollection of the errand that had called him abroad.

The form of his Revolutionary ancestor, Jeremiah Hardy, and the tattered Gartney will, with the new-discovered name, perhaps, of the stout old colonel among the heirs — the old Magraws, his grandmother's race and kin — the heirloom spoon and the Solomon Hardee diamond — he saw them all in phantasm rise and pass before him, and seem to beckon him out toward the sea. He thought of the decline of his family name since his great-grandfather's days, and the boy-ambition which had often fired him to re-

deem it shaped itself into romantic but none the less manly purpose. There may be point, and *prophecy* even, in the reveries of a young fellow of downright, determined nature—like Nicholas Hardy—and character in his transient egotism. It was no violence to his habit of solid thought that, under the heroic stimulus of the moment, our brevet Junior, with his mind just trained up to the more philosophical studies of his college course, fell to reflecting poetically on his possible destiny, and scribbled the lines at the head of the chapter; nor that he added immediately after—

“I dare not scorn the sign, nor slight
The hour when wakes the ancient pride
That hints to me my star may light
Our darken'd fortune's turn of tide.”

How long his dreamy mood would have lasted is uncertain, had not the glimpse of an approaching figure diverted him. Quietly

pocketing his pencil and paper, he smiled at himself to find how strongly the "ancestral spell" was getting hold of him, and was about rising to his feet to move away. He glanced again at the figure coming nearer; he knew it well enough, for it was the figure of a classmate. He sat still and watched the young man. The young man was thinking too — perhaps thinking about *his* ancestors, though in a different way, and for a different reason. It was Bill Dickinson. Biennial had been too much for Bill, and he was looking terribly gloomy. It was known now that he had been dropped, and there were some who had sympathy for him. Poor Bill had never in all his life needed sympathy so much as now. He felt that he had no one to blame but himself for his failure and its consequences: and to have come to that feeling was a great deal for Bill Dickinson. He had gone "down hill" with fearful rapidity since

he came to college. When he entered he was a correct young man, conscientious in study, and faithful to moral and even religious duty. But gradual intimacy with a few fellows of the wilder sort corrupted his innocence, and his "freshman" proprieties were all laughed out of him. His Sophomore history had been a history of increasing neglect, dissipation, and moral decline, with his "matriculation" in hopeless suspense, and his "marks" always hovering among the forties, till Biennial finally stranded him. The forlorn agony of his first knowledge of his loss had made him thoroughly sober. To realize that he was actually *left out* of his class, with no more right to call himself a member, was something indescribably terrible. Depressed and remorseful, brooding over the disgrace to himself and his friends at home, he had wandered out to Collingwood Grove alone.

"Hillo, Dick!"

"Hillo, Nick!"

The response was merely a mechanical echo on Bill Dickinson's part, for he was startled. He had not seen Hardy under the tree. There was no swagger, none of the old rollicking tone in his voice now; it sounded faint, far-off, and half sullen. Nick felt heartily sorry for him.

"Come here and sit down, and keep a fellow company."

Bill turned and looked him full in the face.

"Do you mean it?"

"Certissime, Dick!"

Bill approached the tree, and silently stretched himself on the green sward under the shade.

"There, *in gramine reges*," quoth Hardy, "there's no reason why it shouldn't do us both good to go to grass."

Bill glanced at him sidelong. Surely

Hardy was the last man to be sarcastic over a classmate's misfortune. They lay a few minutes, prattling trifles like tired boys. Nick knew that Bill Dickinson was not entirely bad. Wrong associations, repeated moral surrenders, and all his later weak excesses, had not quite annihilated the nobleness that was in him. There was a trace of manly character even in the way he had faced his examination, the very ordeal that cost him his college standing. Reckless as he was, he took no interest in cheating, and he had made no attempt to "skin" his way through Biennial, as some luckier but meaner men had done. He had met his fate fairly at least, and if in this some of his recklessness played a part, it did not prevent him from suffering keenly now.

"Dick, I know what you are thinking of," said Hardy at length. "I won't ask you what

you are going to do, but I'll tell you what you *can* do, and what *I* should do if I were in your place. I'd study up in vacation, enter Junior (fresh Junior if you like), and graduate with an oration!"

Dickinson made no reply for a minute. Then he spoke with bitter emphasis, rising on his elbow and looking desperately at his classmate.

"Nick Hardy, I've made an ass of myself!"

"So you've said before," answered Hardy. "Many a young fellow makes an ass of himself; that's no reason he should *stay* one. Even Bottom the weaver waked up all right. You've had your dream. Now it's 'Methought I was, and methought I had,' and say there's an end of it. Here are two years to retrieve two. Take your square chance, and, my word for it, you can give odds to Appointment-day."

"Impossible. There's *four* years instead of two — all gone to perdition."

"Granted, if you stop where you are, and give it up. What's your idea of the impossible, Dick?"

"A fool's redemption."

"Honest now, Dick; honest and philosophical; doesn't a man cease to be a fool when he owns up to being one?"

Bill said nothing. He sat nervously biting a twig, and spitting out the bark.

"Silence answers yes," resumed Hardy. "Then you are not a fool, and you are not past redemption. I tell you, Dick, I begin to think this *redeeming* business pays. I mean to do more of it in time to come. I believe it's about half life's work with the best of us."

Hardy's voice softened as he said these words. Bill had thrown down the twig, and pulled out his pocket-handkerchief. For some time neither of the young men spoke.

"If all this," said Dickinson, breaking silence first, — "if all this could be kept from my mother, I believe I could" — and there his words stuck in his throat.

"God bless you, Dick!" said Hardy. "Never you worry for that. It will cost pain, but your unwritten history is safe with your mother; and now *for her very sake* be a man, and live down the old days."

Bill sat with his face buried in his handkerchief.

"Come back to college, Dick. Come back with a resolution as high as heaven. Here is the best place to straighten out these obliquities. Begin new, and this time go in for culture on the uniform plan, intellectual, moral, and *spiritual*. Don't forget old Ionic Hall, second-story class-room, Friday night, Dick. Plant yourself on your privileges; fear God more than you do ridicule; sign the pledge; take temptation by the throat, and

beat the devil on his own ground. There's a lot of us here will lend you a hand, and stand by you. If you don't come out master at that, then truth isn't truth."

Poor Dickinson's pride had been reached before; his conscience was touched now. He was back once more among his first Freshman days, and his tears of contrition ran down like rain.

"Good-bye, Hardy," he said after a pause, rising to go. "It hasn't done me any hurt to go over all this with a friend. Good-bye, and thank you. I leave for home to-night;" and he gave his hand.

"Good-bye, and remember!" said Hardy warmly, grasping the offered hand with both his own; "come back, and 'All's well that ends well.'"

And as the two went their different ways, Hardy thought it quite possible that he had seen the last of jovial, bright, weak, unlucky Bill Dickinson.

Hardy did not write any more poetry that day. But he "lay off" at Collingwood, conceiving the framework of his September oration, until it was time to go to dinner. On his way back, the subject that had interested him so unusually in the morning returned upon his mind, and though it did not again set him dreaming, he resolved that "for the fun of the thing" he would visit Sea-gate Cliff, and do it that very afternoon. His first idea was to get all or several of his boat-club together, and organize an excursion thither in the "Thetis" across the bay; but he recollected that his navy shirt was undergoing repair at the tailor's, and as he could not think of going out to row without his uniform, he was obliged to decide on making the trip by land. He laid his plan before the fellows at dinner, and invited the whole club to go with him. Proc must be one at any rate. No; Proc and five

others had agreed to go up Euclid Lane to Terryfield to play base-ball. Whately and Fay Lewis had no engagement, but they were suspected of nursing an ambition for the Brunel Scholarship (a year ahead), and a design to spend the afternoon "reading up." Finally Matt Calvin, whose love for base-ball was not enthusiastic, struck a bargain with Lewis to report in Terryfield as his substitute, and upon that Hobart Whately told Nick to count him in too. So a party of three from the "Help-meats" was made up for the tramp to the cliff. Hardy, Whately, and Calvin were usually inseparable in their pedestrian excursions and holiday strolls. They started at half-past one, setting their faces country-ward. As Savin Street lay in their route, Nick, remembering Miss Tabitha Magraw's promise to give him certain directions, foresaw a possible discovery on the part of his friends, and laughed inwardly

to think of their recognizing "the countess" at No. 209, and renewing their pleasantries over his old adventure. If they should see Miss Margaret, and — But *he* would not be responsible for anything else they might find out. He should call for Miss Margaret's aunt at all events, at the door. He did not intend to go in. Judge of his amusement when, on coming in sight of the Magraw house, he spied the fair Margaret herself seated on the porch, and, lounging romantically near her, the inevitable Sidney! Bart Whately opened his eyes wide, and his mouth wider, and then crammed his handkerchief into it. Calvin anxiously inquired for a "tub of soap" to put his head in. There was no dodging the secret now; it had been flung directly in their faces. They stopped under the trees at the gate, and stood in agonies of self-restraint while Hardy marched into the yard. Plainly, a general introduction

was the only thing that would make matters easy, and Sidney must manage it, which he did with a great deal of sprawling politeness. Calvin and Bart contrived to impose proper sobriety upon themselves by becoming vehemently interested in Miss Margaret; and Hardy was forced to take his errand into the parlor. Miss Tabitha with great minuteness and painstaking described to him the cave in the cliff, and informed him where and how he could find his ancestor's name. She evidently had much more to say, but saw that Hardy's necessary haste gave her no opportunity, and begging him to call again soon, she followed him into the yard, where, of course, he was obliged to present her to his two friends. The effect was precisely what he expected, and the affair on Linden Street, a year ago, was immediately recalled with mutual laughter. Miss Tabitha invited them to sing "Upidee" again, and promised

not to get frightened and run away; but the three young men excused themselves on the plea that Charley Durkee was not with them, and took their leave with compliments.

"I have got track of the Hanfords," Miss Tabitha said in a low tone to Hardy, as he passed out of the gate behind his companions. "There is a family in Colebridge. I shall write."

Calvin and Whately were in a ferment of fun and curiosity, and Nick had to explain at once, "on pain of being reported to the Faculty," all the complicities of the No. 209 riddle, the relationship of the fair Margaret at the Magraw house, and the coincidence involving spoony young Hinnipick.

He sketched off the history of the situation in high colors, his friends punctuating his speech with interjections and explosive remarks.

“Zounds, Nick!” quoth Whately, when he paused for breath, “didn’t know you was taking us out here to give us such an apocalypse. The shock almost made my teeth loose.”

“Look here, old fellow,” said Calvin, “the worthy countess yonder seems to regard you with a certain maternal interest, and evidently you’re at home in her castle. Satisfy us whether you’re an earl in disguise, and we’ll show you proper respect.”

“Yes, sir!” said Nick, gravely, “Lady Magraw is my fortieth great-aunt, cousin to my grandfather’s first wife on his mother’s side. She owns six millions and a sheep farm, and she’s going to leave me the money and Sid the land.”

“Good!” chuckled Bart; “then Sid will settle down where his mother can find him.”

“Ah, Nick, Nick!” said Calvin, striking

an attitude as he walked, "I tremble for you. It's not every day," he continued, with comic dignity, "that a fellow has tremendous good fortune tumbled upon him by a runaway horse.

'Small are the seeds fate doth unheeded sow
Of slight beginnings to important ends.'

Hold on to yourself with your great expectations, and go slow.

'This cause which your ambition fills
Is one in which your strength you should not waste
Like the vain giants who did heave at hills.

'Tis too unwieldy for the force of haste.'

And there the banter had an end (without Calvin's half knowing how apt his quotation was), for they had passed out to Crampton Meadows, and caught sight of Barkenhead and Tolman rambling about, and amusing themselves with looking through a field-glass.

“Ho, fellows! Going to the cliff?”

“Yes; come on.”

Hardy and his party considered themselves in luck to get the loan of a telescope so easily. It would add much to the charm of the grand out-look from the top of Seagate Cliff.

“There’s a picnic up there,” said Tolman.

“Is there? Let’s see!”

And they looked one by one through the glass at the beetling rock, now only two miles away, while Tolman directed them where to point the tube.

“So there is, sure enough. Well, the more the merrier.”

And the five classmates walked on. Passing through a belt of greenwood, Hardy picked up several dry pine cones.

“*Pining* already!” rallied Calvin. “If you’ve come to that ‘pitch’ so soon, those

picnic girls must have *turpentwined* you at long range."

"No," said Nick; "I'm going to burn 'conic sections' for your benefit."

And Barkenhead, who had hated and flunked conic sections faithfully to the last, said he would help him.

They reached the cliff, climbed up by the north pathway through shrubbery and trees, and stood on the wildest part of its summit. Looking at their watches, they found that they had a good two hours to spare. Half an hour of that time they spent lying on the rocks and looking off, and taking turns with the telescope. They had not been long enough in college to acquire a very scholarly interest in geology, or paleology, but there was not one of them, not even Matt Calvin, who could not lay aside his joking long enough to give a reverent thought to the brown old Devonian masonry of the huge

craggs around them, piled there undated ages ago, and even to the strange marks on their stony faces, and to the wonderful pebbles wrought and polished before there was any reckoning of days and years.

“Antiquity!” muttered Hardy, musing over a piece of stone in his hand with a print on it like a fish’s tail. “Talk of *that* alongside of things as old as these!”

‘O passing Time! O timeless Past!
As dewdrop to the ocean vast,
So shrinks on Nature’s ancient page
The story of *man’s* puny age.’”

“That’s so,” echoed all the rest; and a few minutes afterwards they looked round for him and could not find him.

The infinitely old rocks of Sea-gate Cliff had not put Hardy so entirely out of conceit with antiquity that he could forego his visit to the soldier’s cave. Following the landmarks described to him, he made his

way to the place and crawled inside. Then striking a match, he lit one of the pine cones and explored the roof at the part where he had been told he would find Jeremiah Hardy's name. The search tried his patience a little, for the smoke of his torch would blur everything if held too near, but at length his eye caught a tracing on the stone that nature had not made. Pursuing this with eager care, he succeeded in spelling out the letters "J-e-r-e-m-i-a-h H-a-r-d-i-e." It was a rude scrawl, but he could read it, and the name of his stanch old patriot ancestor, scratched there with his bayonet on the rocky ceiling, for the moment thrilled him like a living face, and put him *en rapport* with the brave spirit so long passed away. Holding high the smoky cone, he moved it around the dim autograph, leaving a black line to mark more distinctly where it was, and hurried out of the cave to find his

friends. On his way he spied something white, lying partly under a stone as if the wind had blown it there. He picked it up. It was a pretty, lace-edged, lady's handkerchief. The mark on it was "E. T. Lincoln." Hastily concluding that some member of the picnic party had dropped it, he put it in his pocket, and returned to the spot where he had left his classmates. They were not there, and he thought if he went at once to restore the handkerchief he might overtake them headed in the same direction. Presently in his wanderings he stumbled upon a rustic group, a detachment from the main party, under an old oak-tree, and saw Tolman talking with one of the ladies. It was a lady with whom Tolman happened to be acquainted, and she had introduced him to her male and female friends.

"I thought this might belong to some one of your company," said Hardy, bowing and

handing the handkerchief to the oldest of the gentlemen. But no one recognized it.

“There is no lady in our company named Lincoln,” said the gentleman ; and Hardy, returning the handkerchief to his pocket, was presented by Tolman to his new friends, chatted a few minutes, and withdrew to join the other Sophomores who were at the bowling-alley in the grove farther down the hill. He remained with them at the alley for some time playing at ten-pins, and making several new acquaintances, and it was not till all had gone out for another stroll in the grove that Tolman came, and they discovered that they had overstayed their time.

“How many can afford marks to-night, and stay here another hour ?” asked Nick.

Nobody could unless it was himself. Their marks were too numerous already.

“Twenty minutes and a half between us

and chapel prayers! It's oysters for the crowd that we don't get there," said Tolman.

"Oysters for the crowd that we *do!*" shouted Barkenhead. "Now start yourselves!"

And down the hill at a tearing pace the five fellows went to the main road. For the first mile Barkenhead's legs took a long lead. It was astonishing to see what strides he made. Then Hardy, who spared his breath while the rest laughed, began to close up the distance. At the end of the second mile he was within three yards of the leader. Half a mile more and he could take his tracks. The sound of the chapel-bell quickened the hindmost to a nervous spurt. Barkenhead began to run; and all the rest were running. At the end of the third mile Hardy was with him neck and neck. The bell had done ringing and began to toll

before they fairly left Crampton Meadows. They took the shortest way they knew; up Vineyard Street, through Cabbage Alley to St. John, down St. John to Walnut, pelting the road like quarter-horses. Barkenhead pulled off his coat. Tolman had caught up with him, and Hardy was leading. They did the fourth mile in incredible time. Across Bower Street, across Train, into Silloway, and straight for the colleges. Ding-dong, tolled the bell. Only three were running now. Calvin and Bart Whately had given it up. Past the corner of Oak and Willow with a rush; past Cherry corner panting and smoking. Ding-dong, tolled the bell. Traverse Street was just ahead. Poor Barkenhead flagged, entirely wind-broken, his astonishing legs going alone. The bell stopped, with Hardy and Tolman racing through the coal-yard, and Barkenhead in the rear sitting on a curb-stone. His narrow chest had col-

lapsed him. And not even Tolman's treat to "the crowd" the next day (he and Hardy were the only ones who saved their marks) could console the mortified fellow for the defeat his legs had suffered.

That evening at Mrs. Hinnipick's there were at least three boarders who ached to hear her ask, "Have you seen Sidney?" The interesting youngster was missing at tea, as he had been at dinner. But the good lady made no inquiries. She probably knew where he was as well as they did. Calvin and Whately requited themselves, however, for their loss of that evening's fun by setting the rest of the club raving about the Savin Street charmer; and when, finally, they all came to eat their last Sophomore dinner and settle their bills, and found Sidney just being welcomed home with open arms after a two days' absence, there was an

outburst of choral comedy and sentimental squibs that must have made fair Margaret Granger's ears tingle two miles off. Poor Sidney got more jokes at his head than there were plums in his pudding, and his happy and congratulating friends at that dinner came much nearer splitting their sides with laughter than with roast-beef. Nor could he forgive himself for getting back just in time to be treaced and gushed over with, "Adieu, my loving Sidney!" "Fare thee well, and *if* forever." "O the agony of it! It wrings my heart out to leave thee!" "You know how it is yourself—parting is *such* sweet sorrow!" and to be fusiladed with rhymes to a musical *pot-pourri* of "Excelsior," and "Pop goes the weasel."

"Now, Peggy dear, be kinder kind!

If you can't *say* you'll marry, find

A pen and ink, and *write* your mind

To your poor Hinnipiga.

I must be spliced this very year,
And if I can't have *you* — O dear,
I'll have an icchouse builded here,
Cold as the Gulf of Riga,
And weep icicles all the year,
And write on every frozen tear,
P-e-g — Peg, g-y — gy."

Hardy called on Miss Tabitha Magraw again, according to her request, before he left New Harbor for his vacation. She had found the broken old escritoir, and brought it home. She showed it to him, and the relic interested him greatly. But when she told him that an inner panel (which she designated with her finger) had been discovered by herself, concealing older papers than any yet found, and said that she *would not show these papers to any one*, not even to him, he could not help wishing that she had kept the whole secret.

While on his way home in the cars Nick's hand came in contact with the pretty lace

handkerchief marked "E. T. Lincoln" in the pocket of his duster, where it had lain since his tramp to Sea-gate Cliff. He drew it out, and this time the sight of the name stirred a little throb of memory. He tried to think if the initials of a certain saucy schoolmate of Fenwick-days were not "E. T."

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH NICK INVESTIGATES.

There is a proud modesty in merit;
Averse from asking, and resolved to pay
Ten times the gifts it asks. — DRYDEN.

IT was somewhat to his surprise, and just a trifle to his vexation, that our young student heard himself congratulated by his old friends in Stonefield and at the “Falls” as an “heir to a great estate.” He certainly had counted on no such inheritance — not yet. The piecing of a marred sentence in the old patched will, so as to make one “Jeremiah Hardie” the devisee of certain property, had seemed to him rather an ingenious and shadowy suggestion than a genuine discovery, and he was unable to see how

a bequest of a few thousand dollars to "Nancy Lyman," his grandmother's mother, could, under the circumstances, ever make him very rich. But it was vain for him to protest or try to explain. The rumor had got about, and his supposed good fortune was the gossip of the day with the simple farming folk who had little else to talk or think of. Uncle Ben James and Aunt Hepsy, who could estimate greatness by dollars and cents better than by scholarship, had a sudden access of vanity over their boy Nick that was quite as amusing as amazing; and all Stonefield, from Mr. Sunderland the minister, and his family, to poor Comfort Grant the black shoemaker, greeted him with an extra smile and a redoubled shake of hands. At the Falls he was noticed with even greater effusion. His poor, ignorant parents and relatives were ridiculously excited over the story of the "great inheritance." They had

even figured out (of their imagination) to a cent the amount of money that was to fall to them, all and several, and they informed Nick (a piece of news worth coming home for certainly) that “there was a *hundred and fifty thousand dollars* comin’ to the Hardys, honest and sure, and your father’n mother’ll have forty thousand, and the children ten thousand apiece!”

Nick shook himself with merriment when he heard this, and told them that their calculations did as much credit to their sense as to their arithmetic. But they could not understand his sarcasm any more than they could share his incredulity. His brother Jerry expected to be a dashing New York buck, and drive a fast horse in Jerome Park; and Abe, who was less ambitious, proposed to buy a share in the big Tinsley Mill. The sisters (married and unmarried), Sue, Phœbe, Annette, and Sally, — all but Jane, — had

been put in such a flutter by their brilliant hopes that they were making downright fools of themselves, and were in danger of running head and ears over in debt for ribbons and plated jewelry. The parents, poor Saul Hardy and his wife, had no more idea what they should do with their money than babes unborn, but they were as much elated as the rest with the prospect of their fortune. As for Silas, he was not there to share in the grand expectations, and nobody knew where he was. Nick laughed, and scolded, and argued, and deprecated. To think that the pulling down of the old Hanford house in North Timlow should have raised such a dust! But it was not till he had traced the golden rumor, and showed how pitifully slender a foundation there was for the story of the Hardys' inheritance, that he could induce them to abate a little their wild hopes of wealth. With Jane he had an easier

task, for culture had made her reasonable and intelligent. He would not positively tell them that there was *nothing*, but taking his cue from Squire Gammel, whom he visited and consulted, he proved that, however much money might be involved in the Hardy claim in the Gartney will suit, it was all in the wind as yet, and when the grand "windfall" would happen (if it *ever* did) no living man could possibly foretell. They did not thank him much for dampening their ardent aspirations, but at least his words had the effect to make them stop *talking* about them.

During most of the summer, any one looking for our friend Nicholas might have found him in Fenwick, at Squire Gammel's office. A few days he spent on the farm, helping Uncle Ben; but he needed money, and as the squire was ready and anxious to employ him at office work, on excellent wages, he made his headquarters with him. No better





opportunity could have been offered the young student to familiarize himself with the terms and the actual routine of the business which he expected one day to engage in himself, or, what was perhaps of less importance, to learn just how far, if at all, he and his relations were concerned in the bequests of the old Gartney parchment, whose interpretation had now come to be the most exacting work in the busy squire's hands. Personal inspection of the replaced fragments on that puzzling document did not perfectly assure Nicholas that Miss Tabitha Magraw's reading was right, and that Jeremiah Hardy's name really belonged there; but the squire, who had been impressed with the ingenuity of her theory, said that the result of all researches thus far tended to make it probable. The explanation was apt and striking; but whether sufficiently so to carry the force of *proof* remained to be seen. When Nicholas told

him that the name written in the Cliff Cave at New Harbor had the same termination as the supposed name in the will, he replied that this fact might prove to be a "lucky straw in the scale." When, at another time, Nicholas produced the bowl of the so-called Solomon Hardee spoon (which he had brought with him but shown to no one else), and related how he came by it, the squire laughed, and said that was certainly something *tangible*; but he added more seriously that from the appearance of Miss Tabitha Magraw, who had visited him when on her quest after the old cabinet, he believed her to be a woman whose opinion was entitled to respect. Her singularly strong conviction as to the rightful ownership of the old escritoir was based on family tradition, and would be testimony, at least where there was no direct record to rebut it. The old cabinet and the old spoon-bowl were palpable things, and had a

history. He must see if these "wooden facts" could not be made links in evidence. The task would be to fit them in the chain in their right places.

"And I beg you to take notice," added the squire again, smiling, "as I warned Miss Magraw when she got possession of the cabinet, — I lay this ancient spoon-bowl under bonds to appear in court when called for."

Naturally, the name of old Dr. Norcross was often mentioned, and always with respect. His assistance in the will case had well earned the squire's gratitude, and the more so since he did the work for the love of it, and would take no pay.

"If he were not a rich man, as I understand he is," said the squire, "I could never feel free to apply to him again. But his life is among old records and mysteries of traditional lore, and when any one calls on

him for a curious fact, or a forgotten name, he hunts it up with as much pleasure as if he were receiving a favor instead of giving one. You did me a real service in this business, Hardy, when you put me in communication with Dr. Norcross."

Some question had arisen as to the authenticity of the witnesses to the old will, and to trace and identify these, the help of a practised antiquary would save the lawyer much time and trouble. Squire Gammel determined to send Nicholas to Hightown to talk with the old doctor, and see if he could tell who "Isaiah Marley" and "John Burdett" were. By this time the inquiring spirit of our hero had become so far engaged in these ancient matters that he was prepared to undertake the journey with pleasure, and to listen with patience to any amount of family history or grandæval learning that his old friend the doctor might choose to

inflict upon him. In fact, the nature of his errand made it quite in the way of *business* to do so; and he now actually had a piece of the "wooden spoon" to show. He rode to Hightown, and was received by the doctor with an eager welcome, and a free tender of all the information he possessed touching the matter in hand. But when Nicholas took out the old spoon-bowl, and mentioned Miss Tabitha Magraw, and her account of it, the old man's enthusiasm was overwhelming. He handled and inspected the relic with loving fingers and glowing eyes, and for a long time could talk of nothing else.

"Ah! didn't I tell you so, Hardy?" he exclaimed exultingly. "And I'll tell you more, and don't you forget it," he went on; "the other half of this sacred keepsake—the part with a fortune in it—is *somewhere in existence yet*. Hold on to this, my favored friend, as a talisman. It will bring you luck.

It is your indenture bond to the service of your race."

Returning to Fenwick from his conference with the imaginative but shrewd old doctor, Nicholas was able to report to Squire Gammel that a descendant of "Isaiah Marley" lived in Colebridge City, and the squire immediately proposed that his young friend should go there and "interview" the person. This suited Nicholas exactly, for travelling was a luxury which his means would not let him indulge in very often, and to be able thus to take his work and his needed recreation together was clear gain. Vacation was drawing near its close when he was ready to go, and it was arranged that he should return to college directly from Colebridge, and send the result of his inquiries to the squire in writing. Preferring the water route to the shorter but dusty railway, he took passage at Fenmouth in one of the small

coast-steamers that ran up the river from Fairport, and embarked on a golden morning late in August, prepared for six hours of leisure and cool enjoyment. He saw none among his fellow-passengers whom he knew, or who he had any reason to suppose knew him, but presently, while he sat aft in a camp-chair on the saloon-deck, gazing out over the sea, a well-dressed, sharp-eyed man began to watch him, as if he had either seen him somewhere, or meant to mark him for future reference. It was a long time before Nick noticed him walking to and fro, or standing with others at the taffrail; but when he discovered that he was looking at himself rather attentively and frequently, he of course wondered what he wanted. His momentary suspicions of ill design vanished, however, on observing that he appeared to be a friend of the captain of the boat, and being accosted shortly after by the stranger

in a manner very different from the style of "confidence operators," and genteel black-legs.

"I see by the ticket in your hat, sir, that you are going to Colebridge," said he. Nicholas replied that such was his intention. "I live in Colebridge," continued the stranger, "but unexpectedly I am obliged to delay my return home for several days, and shall leave the boat at Nohannic. Will you do me the favor to carry a letter to my wife?"

Nick could do no less than signify his willingness to oblige him, if he would tell him where to find his residence; and the man thanked him, and went down into the cabin to write his letter. He soon returned with it sealed and directed, and handing it to Nick, said, —

"There are fifty dollars in this letter, and I am anxious that my wife should get it to-day. My name is Mulford, as you will infer

from the address. I hope No. 14 Henry Street will not take you too far out of your way."

"But," said Nicholas, "you do not know who I am. How can you trust me with money? I promise to do your errand, but —"

"It is immaterial to me *who* you are," interrupted the stranger, smiling. "I think I know *what* you are. I am older than you, and have learned how to read men." And bidding him a pleasant "good-day," he immediately went below, for the boat was now very near Nohannic landing.

Nick had intended to ask the stranger from Colebridge some questions about the descendant of "Isaiah Marley," for though he had the name, he did not yet know the street and number where the person lived whom he was expected to find. He was obliged to wait, however; and waiting was

easy (after passing Fairport), in sight of the shore scenery of the beautiful river on whose bosom he was borne along to his journey's end.

He arrived in Colebridge at two o'clock, and at once inquired his way to Henry Street. Before going there it occurred to him to consult a directory. If he should find that he could locate all his errands on one route, he would avoid going over unnecessary ground. Having copied the name and number of Simon Gaines, he looked for "Hanford;" for Miss Tabitha Magraw, who had promised to trace this family, had made no satisfactory report as yet, and Squire Gammel, feeling impatient, had requested Nicholas to see to it. He was astonished to discover that the only "Hanford" in the city lived at No. 14 Henry Street! Resolving to make his first call at the Gaines residence in his way, if possible, he started

on his walk. He learned, on inquiry, that Simon Gaines was dead, and that his aged widow, the person of whom he was in search, had moved from her old home to a distant part of the city. He then went on to Henry Street, but was disappointed again in finding no one at home at No. 14 but an old, half-deaf man, who came forward, with a trumpet to his ear, and wanted to know who he was, and where he came from, and what he was after. Nick screamed the information into his trumpet; and then he insisted on knowing whose son he was, and whose grandson, and whose great-grandson, and "*what Gammel*" it was that sent him there, and how Mulford happened to give him money to bring home. The visitor saw that he had a herculean job on his hands, but still he staid, hoping that the old gentleman would stop asking questions after a while, and consent to *talk*. Of course the thing he felt

most anxious to find out was when he could see Mrs. Mulford, and deliver the money.

“When do you expect the family home, sir?”

“Hey?” (poking the trumpet into his face.)

“When will your folks come home?” (louder.)

“O, they’ll be home to-night. How long did you say the Hardys had lived in Fenwick Falls?”

This was about as near to anything like conversation as Nick could bring the old gentleman. He would have to stop and answer his questions, and then return to the charge again.

“At what hour this evening will Mrs. Mulford be here?”

“Hey?”

“*What time* to-night will your folks come nome?”

“O, they’re coming home to supper! Did you say this Gammel was Mulford’s uncle?”

It was up-hill work. Nick began to sweat considerably, and to debate in his mind whether he had not better escape to a hotel, and advertise for Mrs. Mulford to come and see him. He sat like a martyr, and allowed himself to be pumped till he had told how old he was, and what he was doing; how many brothers and sisters he had, and what *they* were doing; his father’s business, his mother’s age; and whether he looked like her; how much it was costing him a year to go through college, and where he expected to get his money. Several times the young man tried to shoot in a question himself, but it was of no use. He could not begin to hold his own with the deaf old gentleman. He did, however, finally manage to make him say that Mrs. Mulford would be at home at six o’clock; and with that

he knew he ought to consider himself fortunate, and make good his retreat. But having faced the music thus far, he was rash enough to think that he might extract another answer or two, if he stuck to his work. He had no idea who the old gentleman was, and hated to ask him; but finding him domiciled at No. 14 Henry Street, and remembering the directory, he believed his gray head must be a perfect portfolio of family facts just such as he, and Squire Gammel, and Miss Tabitha Magraw were hunting for, and which it would be a great pity not to find out. He ventured to make an inquiry about the genealogy of the Hanfords.

“What do you want to know that for?” thundered the old gentleman, starting forward, and glaring at Nick with a pair of gimlet eyes that seemed to bore holes through him. Nick undertook to explain into the trumpet. “Hey! What do you want to

know for?" was the only effect his explanation produced.

He shouted into the old ear-trumpet once more, with the same result, and then gave it up. Seizing his hat, he bowed himself out of the house as gracefully as he could, the old gentleman's words following him into the street like a parting gun. "What do you want to know for? Hey? What do you want to know *that* for?"

Nicholas walked away with mingled emotions of annoyance, amusement, and wonder. Who was this singular old being, — this superannuated interrogation-point, this incarnation of suspicion and curiosity. The conundrum was too much for him.

He found the aged widow Gaines, after a somewhat tedious search, and talked with her an hour, receiving a great deal of valuable information, which he carefully wrote down. The venerable woman's manner with

him was in such contrast to his late queer reception, that when he left her he felt all the more reluctant to visit the Mulford house again. He went there, nevertheless, after procuring his supper and making his arrangements for the night; and instead of the prying old man with the ear-trumpet, the first person he met was his old school-mistress! Mr. Hanford, her husband, was Mrs. Mulford's brother, and boarded with his family at her house. Mrs. Mulford soon came in, when Nicholas at once delivered to her the money her husband had sent, and being urged warmly by her and her friends, decided to stay and spend the evening. Nothing could exceed the keen pleasure he felt in living over his boyhood days with the amiable lady who corrected his early rogueries, and was one of the first to discover and call out the good that was in him. It was easy for him, too, to obtain all the knowledge of her hus-

band's family that was of importance to his errand. His deaf old catechizer was nowhere to be seen. Mr. Hanford and Mrs. Mulford alluded with a peculiar smile to the young man's call in the afternoon. The old gentleman was their grandfather, and his name was Rodney Tudor. They said very little about him more than to remark excusingly that he was aged and had ways of his own, and that, being very hard of hearing, he lived mostly in the past, and rarely spoke unless he was spoken to. In a few confidential words aside with his friend Mrs. Hanford, Nicholas was given to understand further that "Grandpa Tudor" was a kind of household hermit, and a trifle miserly; that no one knew how much wealth he owned, and, in short, that there was "something strange about him."

Most of our friend Nick's leisure, after his

return to college, was employed in finishing and committing to memory his "Statement of Facts" oration. Custom allowed him to make this performance as eloquent as he would and as funny as he could. The argument of such a speech was usually rather of the order of a "moot-court" plea, being very earnest, with a sprinkling of the mock-earnest, — an excellent practical lesson in rhetoric, and good play-room exercise for a young advocate. Indeed, "Statement of Facts," in its best days, was an annual college grand match of rhetorical gymnastics, in which youthful lawyers and legislators took their first training in political debate.

The day arrived on which our hero was first to take active part in this rival presentation of the two great Societies, and a handsome carriage conveyed the Athenic dignitaries of the occasion — Hardy, the Senior orator, and the president — from their hotel

headquarters to Brinley Hall. To the same place, from a rival hotel, in similar pomp, rode the dignitaries of the Adelphi. The hall was crammed with "all college," Seniors, Juns, Sophs, and Fresh, waiting and eager to cheer their favorite speakers as uproariously as they could. Were it not that nearly all the humor of its hits, and the point of its polemic, and the force of its argument, depended on the relations and circumstances of the hour, and vanished when these passed away, I might set down a specimen of Nicholas' oration.

Suffice it to say, he proved to a perfect demonstration (as he was expected to do) that the Athenic graduates averaged vastly superior in history to those of the Adelphi, and that his society had produced greater statesmen, greater orators and poets, greater masters of science, greater editors, greater philanthropists, and greater teachers, and had given to the college more presidents and

popular professors and tutors, more benefactors of its library and treasury, more prize-medal and scholarship-men, more editors of the college magazine, and more Senior Society-men (!) than could be found in all the memorabilia of the other society, if raked and scraped from A to Izzard. He made fun of the Adelphi's hall, describing its splendors in a strain of comic eulogy that called out thunders of Athenian applause and earthquakes of Adelpian groans; and withal (following the custom of former years) he ridiculed the exploits of the rival society's most vaunted hero, a man whose enterprise had greatly promoted stock-farming and manufactures, portraying him, in verse, as an importer of sheep, and sketching the scene of his first woolly arrival, when —

“ Hailed by ten thousand thankful fellow-*creeturs*,

His golden flock great Jason up the quay

Led, softly calling in iambic metres

‘Ca-da, ca-da, ca-da!’”

And following this with an elaborate account of the genealogy of "Mary's Little Lamb," he rung the changes on the distinguished sheep-man's greatness, ending off his closing apostrophe with —

"So, still in chorus of Adelpian bleaters,
When some new-fleeced bell-wether leads the way,
You hear the ghostly shepherd's old canteturs—
 'Ca-da, ca-da, ca-da!'"

But to attempt to make my reader appreciate the pith and wit of an old "Statement of Facts" oration would be like trying to restore the natural flavor to a dried strawberry, or a petrified peach.

In the afternoon the Adelphi had their turn, when waggish Matt Calvin, the Junior orator, and his colleagues, of course proved to a perfect demonstration that most of the greatness and celebrity gathered around the names in the old college's "Triennial," belonged to the graduates who had been num-

bered in *their* society; and of course for three retaliative hours the Athenics "took it," hip and thigh.

The day closed, leaving both parties in a state of great exultation and victorious assurance, and the yet "unpledged" Freshmen in as much doubt as ever which society they ought to join.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH NICK IS SURPRISED SEVERAL TIMES.

He thought, and thought—and knew not what to think.

COWPER.

IT'S too unmercifully bad!" cried Hardy, rushing into his bedroom for his hat. "It's outrageous! Here's the unpleasant side of a practical joke, certainly! Well, well!"

Two panting and terrified callers had rushed in upon him as he sat reading by his study-fire, and almost upset him by their sudden appearance and strange story. There was a man lost! What could it mean? Nick had never been so flustered and confounded in his life.

“Look here,” he exclaimed again, standing stock-still with his overcoat on, and his hat and gloves in his hand, “I don’t know where I’m going, now. What in the Sphinx’s name can Oliver have done with himself? Why, I *saw* him get aboard — didn’t I? Is it possible that the fellow — ” and Nick almost caught himself laughing right in the middle of the appalling quandary. “Pshaw! if he did, of course he’d keep still about it, and take the next train. Sit down, Nett, and rest yourself, and I’ll run down to the telegraph-office, and send a despatch.”

But his company were in no mood to sit down. They followed at his heels, and all three soon stood at the window of the lightning-man. In ten seconds more a piece of paper slid in through the window, with two written lines on it, signed “Nick Hardy.”

“Hardy?” said the operator. “Here’s a

despatch directed to 'Hardy,' that I've just taken off. Was just going to send it."

Nick and his companions eagerly read it.

"FENWICK FALLS, 3-20 P. M. Oliver is here all right. Come. JERRY."

The mystery was not *all* cleared up yet; but they could afford to laugh. And laugh they did — all but the young lady, who looked as if she wanted to cry in spite of the good news.

"What time does the next train go?"

"Half past nine," said Nick; "an hour and a half from now. You won't think of going home to-night."

"Yes, I shall. Come, Abe, I'm going back to the depot."

"Plucky girl!" quoth Nick, with a flash of admiration. "But here, I'll take care of you two till you are ready to go."

The three went to a restaurant and had

a good supper and some quiet talk ; and at half past nine a young man and woman shook hands with Hardy, and got aboard the eastward-bound express.

Now, before my readers can know what all this means, I must tell them that, the day before, Hardy had been surprised and delighted by a visit from his old Fenwick schoolmate, Oliver Wales. Oliver was an honest, steady-going young man, of a mechanical turn, thrifty, plodding, and patient,—a thoroughly good, safe, solid citizen of twenty-three. Though his course at the academy had been somewhat broken, and his student days ended there, he was by no means poorly educated ; and while not brilliant, his careful habits and ready faculty with his hands had enabled him to coin money already out of an excellent trade. Within a few months he had been given a responsible place at

high wages in one of the mills at Fenwick Falls. Hardy had seen him there during the past summer. But none the less for that was he astonished when Oliver walked into his room one day just after Thanksgiving, and announced that he was married! It was natural enough that Hardy should hail him with rousing congratulations and slaps on the back. While Oliver was telling him that he intended to "astonish him some more," the door opened, and Proc came in.

"Do you know Wales?" cried Hardy, in the hilarity of the moment. "The best fellow in the world! I make you acquainted;" and he presented him in a way that made him and Proc fast friends at once. Pretty soon, with his usual single knock and prompt swing of the door, Matt Calvin came in.

"Do you know Wales?" quoth Proc, taking the hint of freedom from Nick's mood and Wales' own good-humor. And immedi-

ately Oliver and Matt were introduced to each other. The party was growing jollier, as well as larger, and Nick playing the pleased host, lugged out a huge basket of late pears, amid loud applause.

“ Now, fellows, sit round,” said he ; “ we’ll cut into these Flemish Beauties, and feast in honor of our friend, *a young benedict*, — just taken his first matrimonial degree ! ” And then, of course, the fun was livelier than ever ; and if Nick had told them that the Flemish Beauties were a present to him from the “ countess,” there might have been more fun. In the midst of the feasting there was another sharp knock on the door, and in came Barkenhead and Whately. A noisy mutual salute followed, of course, and the merriment culminated when Proc and Calvin, both in a breath, asked them “ if they knew Wales.”

Oliver began to think there was some

preconcerted method in the sport. Really, however, the meeting of the fellows was accidental. It was Thanksgiving recess, and they had nothing to do but visit each other, and be sociable; and "Do you know Wales?" had been suddenly caught up like any other spontaneous joke.

"Don't this remind you of old Fenwick days?" asked Hardy of Oliver; and Oliver admitted that it did. But for all that he grew uneasy before the visitors went away. When he was alone with Hardy again, he said, "I must go now, and *you must go with me.*"

Nick was a little taken aback at this. Of course he was all anxiety to see his friend's new bride, but — but — wouldn't Mrs. Wales be resting after her journey, &c., &c.

"Well, the fact is," said Oliver, with a droll smile, "when I left 'Mrs. Wales,' she was in considerable of a hurry to see *you,*

and I suppose she's wondering now why you don't come."

"The mischief she is!" exclaimed Nick, who saw now that there was a discovery in wait for him. He went with Oliver to the hotel, and was politely introduced to *his sister Annette!*

"You old rascal! I've a good mind to pull your whiskers! How in the world did you two manage to keep the secret so well?" cried Nick. And, of course, his comical wonder was great entertainment to his sister and brother-in-law.

Then came the laughing explanations. It had been a case of "love at first sight" between Oliver and "Nett." She worked in the loom-room where he was overseer. When Nick was at home in the summer there was a coolness between them. But her brother's sensible talk had rather shamed her foolish notion of setting up for a possible heiress,

and her real love for the young machinist came out triumphant. A Thanksgiving wedding was the result, and they decided to make a bridal trip to New Harbor, and surprise "brother Nick." "Brother Nick" was inexpressibly gratified and delighted. He dined with the young couple, spent the afternoon showing them round, staid with them to supper (Oliver insisting on paying all expenses), and in the evening, at the bridegroom's invitation, he took Proc, Calvin, Barkenhead, and Whately to the hotel to see "Mrs. Wales." Annette was pretty, and it is needless to say the young men were highly pleased and complimentary, and left pledges of romantic remembrance when they withdrew.

The next morning Nick accompanied the pair to the railroad station, and while Oliver went to see to the loading of some new household purchases, he found his sister a

seat in one of the cars. When the three-minute bell struck he left the car, and soon after, seeing Oliver (as he supposed, in the dim light of the old underground depot) jump aboard near the baggage-van, he shouted "Good-bye" to him, and hurried away just as the train began to move. And now began the vexatious snarl that made that day's history the joke of a whole honeymoon. Having shipped his baggage, Oliver, bethinking him to purchase a package of dainties for his bride, glanced at the station-clock, and ran up stairs to the refreshment-saloon. The usual racket around the depot, and the noise of an incoming train, were somewhat confusing to a stranger. He heard a station-signal while his package was being put up, but the waiter-girl told him it was the three-minute bell. He hastened down as soon as he received his confectionery, but it was only to see his train moving rapidly

out at the lower end of the depot. The bell he had heard was the starting-bell! He ran with all his might for five or six rods, but it was a useless chase. The reader can fancy the poor fellow's emotions. But badly as he felt, his deserted bride was in worse distress. Her alarm when he failed to appear increased with every mile of the swift-going wheels. Where could Oliver be? Was it possible that he had been left? Was he forward, still busy with the baggage-man? Was he in the smoking-car? Had he been killed? Had he *run away*? Every kind of absurd and horrible suggestion came up, to be as soon dismissed for another. The train was an express, and would stop but once in the whole fifty miles. All the passengers were entire strangers to her, and the bashfulness of a young, newly-married girl, unused as yet to speak of her "husband," for a long time kept her dumb. She made up her

mind to get off at the half-way station, but when she finally told the conductor her trouble, he said that undoubtedly her companion was "left," and would come on in the next train. Poor Annette had never in all her life done so much thinking as she did on that desolate journey. It almost made her old. But her suspense and mortification were turned to terror when she reached home and was shown a telegram just received from New Harbor,—

"Do you know Wales?"

The family had puzzled their heads over it in vain, and when Annette arrived without her husband, they all sympathized with her alarm. In less than ten minutes another telegram came,—

"We have found a man who don't know Wales."

Annette was nearly distracted. She could not eat. She could not sit still. Nothing would do but she must start again in the next return train, and get back to New Harbor. A despatch was sent to Nick, making inquiry (for both the messages were signed with a strange name), but being misdirected, for some reason, to the hotel where Wales had lodged, it brought no response. Abe was called out of the mill to go with his sister in search of her husband. It was a "case of life and death," and he could not refuse. So the two started together.

Not very far from the same time Oliver Wales, worried and terribly impatient with long waiting, started *from* New Harbor on an eastward train. Chagrin at his foolish mishap had prevented him from reporting himself to Hardy, and he had hung about the depot forlorn and alone. At six o'clock,

the young husband and wife, riding opposite ways, passed, all unconscious, within two feet of each other on the railroad. The arrival of Annette in New Harbor produced the scene described at the opening of the chapter. The arrival of Oliver in Fenwick Falls set flying the despatch from Jerry, which began to put matters right again.

Proc, Calvin, and the rest of the pear party, had, with Nick's connivance, conceived and sent the two telegrams to Fenwick Falls, intending them to reach there about the time he did, and furnish an innocent pleasantry for him to laugh at. And this was the way the joke ended.

But, as Nick declared with a good deal of gleeful pride, the lively experiences of that day "made a woman of Nett." She not only learned to say "My husband" out plump and bold, but learned how much she loved him, and how it seemed for once to

have all her energies waked up, and to act decidedly for herself.

A week after the singular *contretemps* that played such a comedy with Wales and his bridal tour, Nicholas Hardy had another surprise. Term-time had come again, and he was hard at work on his studies, when one evening there appeared to him, grave and quiet as a Quaker, the lost, forgotten Bill Dickinson! The change in his looks and manner was so great that his old classmate did not at first know him.

"*You did it,*" he said, smiling when Nick recognized him with a shout and a grip. "You just *did it*, Hardy, when you gave me that talking to up there in Collingwood. I've been at work ever since like a tiger, and I've pretty nearly caught up. I've been here three days, keeping dark till I had my private examination; and now, barring a con-

dition on Mathematics, I'm a *Junior* with a clear title, and can begin recitations to-morrow!"

Hardy was so astonished and overjoyed that he did not know what to say. For half a minute he stood looking at him.

"Dick, brave old boy, *I admire you!*"

"Nick, brave old boy, I *thank* you! — but you may keep the admiration. I am getting back some of the ambition of better days, and I intend to get back some of the character, too. Pray for me, and lend me a helping hand, as you said you would — that's all."

"Aye, and I am not the only one who'll do that, Dick," said Hardy fervently.

Bill Dickinson was soon a member of the class again, in good and regular standing; and from that time he held on his way nobly, completely redeeming himself long before the end of his course.

By the end of winter the condition of his finances began to trouble Hardy again. So far as *time* was money, his course thus far in his third year had been easier for his means, and his membership in a Junior society was not wasteful either of dollars or hours. But one soon finds the bottom of a short purse, and now Nick's old problem returned upon him. He determined that he would try to obtain a class, or a place as tutor in some one of the schools of the city.

Junior Exhibition (a sort of rehearsal "in character" of the grand graduation performance on Commencement Stage-day, a year later) came on early in April, and for the first time the members of the class stood before the college public, ranged according to their scholarship. Hardy had an oration, but chose to write his part in verse, and of course his name appeared on the programme with a "poem" scheduled against it. The

title of his poem was "The Last King of Atlantis;" and after the exhibition was over, he found that he had had at least one appreciative hearer more than he counted on. Away up in a back seat of the gallery of the old chapel, the only seat he could find unfilled, sat a man who, attracted first by the poet's subject, listened to his poem with vivid relish from prelude to epilogue; and that man took the trouble to inquire out the poet's room, and wait for him in the dark hall till he came up. Hardy was not a little perplexed to meet, at ten o'clock in the evening, a stranger at his door who introduced himself as Horace Godwin, and he was still more perplexed when, on being invited in, the man excused his presence on the ground of his old interest in the legend of the lost Atlantis, and his new interest in its poetic treatment on the stage that night, and went on to say that he hoped no apol-

ogy was needed for desiring to be acquainted with the author of such lines as,—

“The sunlight slept on Atalan,
 And, gleaming like a warrior’s helm,
 The palace-domes of Odofan
 Rose up amid her island realm.
 Soft were the ocean winds among
 Her glens as dreamer’s breathing free,
 And siren-sweet the birds that sung
 In that Al Irem of the sea,
 Where groves of nut and banyan green
 Grew aged in the climate calm,
 And, crowning all the leafy scene,
 Towered fadeless summer’s tops of palm.”

Hardy’s perplexity became amazement now. The strange man was repeating his poem word for word! And he went on repeating, line after line, until he was stopped. Hardy, who had struck his light and seated his guest, sat down himself and gazed at him. Horace Godwin was a medium-sized, heavily-bearded man, with a bald head, unsatisfac-

tory blue eyes, and rather seedy clothes; but Horace Godwin was evidently a prodigy. He began to talk prose, and the prose was a great deal more wonderful than the poetry, for it was his own. His language was choice, and his sentences fairly sparkled with rhetorical beauty; and when he began to quote again it seemed to make no difference with him whether he quoted English, or Latin, or Greek.

“I think that in your story of Atlantis you followed the hints of Plato, Mr. Hardy,” said he courteously.

“Partly Plato, and partly fancy,” replied Hardy, laughing.

“You preferred that form of the legend to the account given by Theopompus?”

“I never read Theopompus,” said Hardy.

“Ah! so your eye never happened to fall on that rich old fragment in Aelian’s *Variae Historiæ* ;” and he glided into the

story as familiarly and naturally as if he had been relating the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, giving it in charming English, mingled with more charming Greek, but apparently checking himself in the latter, as though afraid it might sound a little pedantic.

“Let me have the original,” said Hardy (to try him). “You are telling me more about Atlantis than I ever knew.”

And, to his astonishment, Godwin, without the slightest sign of consciousness that he was performing a feat, went on fluently reciting the original Greek of Theopompus' fragment in Aelian, till Hardy ached with sheer pain of attention in trying to follow him. Wrought up to the highest pitch of wonder and curiosity, he contrived to change the subject and introduce conversation that would “draw out” his accomplished visitor in other directions. He found that he was as familiar with the living languages of Europe as with

the old classics; and when he appealed to him on some question in his French and German (for Nick had taken up these as Junior "optionals"), and begged him to render the meaning of sundry remembered crucial passages in his Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, Æschylus, and Arrian, he translated and explained everything with an ease and nicety that showed cultured taste no less than thorough learning.

It seemed to Hardy that he had never before met so ripe a scholar. By leading suggestions, and partly by direct inquiry, he learned that Godwin was a graduate of an English university. How to reconcile this with his present threadbare appearance troubled Nick not a little. Perhaps the visitor divined his thoughts, and meant to divert him, for he made a remark calling attention to the old wooden-spoon bowl, which Hardy now kept hung, with other characteristic

college-boy trophies, on the wall of his room.

“You are not a cochleareatus?”

“No, sir. That is supposed to be a relic of an old sea-faring ancestor of mine — a souvenir of his captivity and rescue from starvation, among the Turks, or Tartars, or some such kind of people.”

“Ah, one of the Viatka spoons, perhaps. They make thirty millions of those wooden ladles in Russia every year.”

“I don't know. The story goes that he made it himself, — or had it made, — and that the handle had a diamond in it.”

“I see. An heirloom with a mystery to it. There's a boating chorus it recalls to mind. We used to sing it at the university.

‘O, the old sun laughs as he lightly quaffs
His ocean-cup merry and boon,
And brave eyes wink o'er the foamy drink
That's stirred with the commodore's spoon.’”

“A decidedly bibulous song,” said Nick. “But I am a teetotaller, and I should be sorry if the commodore had ever stirred his drink with *that* spoon.”

“Possibly he did, though, if old *Commodore Hardy* is the man meant,” said Godwin, laughing, as he rose to go.

It was nearly midnight. He placed in Hardy's hand a small book written by himself, a treatise on the legend of Atlantis. Nicholas expressed his obligations, not attempting to conceal his wonder at the man's rare learning; nor could he avoid hinting an inquiry as to his present location and business.

“A man of your attainments,” said he, with another involuntary glance at his seedy clothes, “should command ten thousand a year.”

Horace Godwin's unsatisfactory blue eyes

flashed. "Mr. Hardy," said he, "I am *not* a teetotaller, like you. In *this* country that makes all the difference between the few hundreds I get for translating commercial letters, and the possible 'ten thousand.' I lost a tutor's position," he continued, resuming the easy frankness he had shown at first, "a few weeks ago, at the Park Avenue Female Seminary, because they found out I loved wine too well. Probably it is better that a man of my appetites should be kept poor. And so we'll let that go." And after a little general conversation, and a brief passage of courtesies, the seedy scholar took his leave.

If I say that eventually, through the influence of the venerable clergyman whom he had met at Miss Tabitha Magraw's, Nick secured a private class for his remarkable new friend, I shall only anticipate a little;

and if I say that, on the recommendation of Professor Thirwall, he secured Horace Godwin's lost tutorship at the Park Avenue for himself, I shall only state what my reader might have guessed without doing injustice to anybody. When he first saw his class he noticed that one of the pupils, a beautiful young lady, blushed and evidently recognized him. But it was not till he spoke to her, after the lesson, that he could really recall who she was.

"It is nearly four years since I beat you in the Virgil match at Fenwick," she said roguishly.

"Miss Nelly Lincoln! Well, you *have* changed. How long have you been here?"

"Almost two terms. Father came here with me just before last summer vacation, and entered my name."

Hardy smiled curiously. "I do not know

how I happened to have *this* with me; it has been a good while folded," he said. And he took from one of his pockets the little lace-edged handkerchief he had picked up on the cliff, and restored it to its owner.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH NICK HELPS THE "COCHLEAUREATI."

. . . One of many 'wooden spoons,'
. . . . (The name with which we Cantabs please
To dub the last of honors in degrees.) — BYRON.

THE position of the *highest* scholars in a large college often brings more honor than comfort, for it is no easy thing to fill it gracefully and to popular acceptance. Led naturally, by their similarity of attainments, to associate with each other, these "first men" are likely to create a suspicion of being exclusive and aristocratic, which is sure to bring upon them the unmerciful banter of all the low-appointment and no-appointment men, who are the large majority of the class. The middle scholars, on the contrary, are almost

always on excellent terms with the highest and the lowest, being equally able to appreciate the real excellence of the "first men," and to laugh with the multitude at any airs they may put on. Nicholas Hardy's "stand" as a scholar placed him very much like this, in his class, and as it had become customary in his day for the *cochleareati*,* or mock-honor men, to select the actors for their "Wooden Spoon Exhibition" from the most "witty, genial, and gentlemanly," as well as from the poorest scholars of the class, there was no unfitness in his accepting a part for which his popularity put him in demand.

The Wooden Spoon Exhibition was a burlesque of Junior exhibition, and occurred two

* From the Latin *cochlear*, "spoon," and *laureatus*, "crowned." The *cochleareati*, or "spoon-laureates," were originally all the Juniors who took no "honor," or got no appointment on the Junior exhibition list. The student who took the Wooden Spoon was (originally) the last "colloquy" man, or the one standing lowest on the appointment list.

months later, or towards the close of the college year. Hardy agreed to prepare, and read or deliver, a treatise of some kind on the occasion, suitably humorous and absurd, of course; and his presence and Matt Calvin's (the only other "oration" man who took part) would relieve the spoon-laureates from their supposed pretension that wit and poor scholarship went together.

There was a general feeling that Proc ought to be made the recipient of the wooden spoon, but the very canons of irony that would seem to have assured it to him cut him off with a technicality. The "honors" had not extended down far enough to touch Proc, nor would have done so if the Faculty had tacked on a "third colloquy," or a "soliloquy" below that, and, as the theory of the matter then stood, it would mar the point of the satire if the spoon-man should be any other than the lowest scholar

who *got an appointment*. The spoon, invested with all the fun and comical pomp of a public presentation, was that individual's perquisite, to console him for his ridiculous and exposed position as tail-end man. In Nick's class, the tail-end man happened to be Barkenhead; and to Barkenhead accordingly was assigned the spoon. Bark was rich enough to shoulder the distinction, and carry it off quite grandly; and in fact the majority of the "cochleareates" could make up in money what they lacked in scholarship. Of course they bore all expenses, and honorary partners like Hardy and Calvin shared the presentation sport without being taxed to "pay the fiddlers," which—considering that said "fiddlers" were the famous Dodworth's Band from New York—was no trifling exemption.

Barkenhead entered on his preparations with a zeal which he had never shown over his books. The time he spent studying pat-

terns, and negotiating with wood engravers and silversmiths, would, if employed in regular work, have redeemed many a dismal flunk in his logic and mathematics. But if it had not been this diversion, it would have been some other, and Bark was fortunate in having nothing more frivolous or questionable than a wooden spoon to take up his mind. He could find nothing, in all his search after models, that pleased him so well as the old relic that hung in Hardy's room; and many and frequent trips thither his long legs made pending his cochlelaureate knighthood. He examined the ancient bowl and its stump of a handle with critical admiration, and shouted approval while Nick, with the gravity of a grand vizier, set forth the mysterious value of the venerable piece, and told its history with eloquent embellishments, and the end was the adoption of its design, in every known particular, for the ceremonial spoon.

Nick's poetical fancy supplied the pattern of the handle, and the order was committed to the artists, who in due time turned out a perfect *chef d'œuvre* of a ladle three feet long. There was something weird-looking in the very beauty of the carved, polished, black-walnut, silver-mounted wonder to Nick when he first saw it. The curious old sharp-beaked bowl that he had looked at so long, and dreamed over sometimes, had been reproduced exactly, with its delicately moulded rim, and its rakish taper, and its exquisitely carved grape-leaf on the convex at the spring of the handle,—only the copy had a fine silver line running round the border. This variety, however, was probably a restoration, for Barkenhead, in squinting over the original, had discovered a bit of silver thread deep in the wood, and insisted, with very ingenious show of reason, that the missing portion of the thread had once encircled the

bowl, starting each way from the thumb-swell, and following the little groove under the bead. The handle of the spoon was an elegant stem, having the spinal, line-of-beauty curve, elaborated to the tip with chevron and scale-work, and silvered with fillets and damaskeen filigree. The flat end bore a silver escutcheon, with the presentation date and the recipient's name, and I must not omit to add that in the stoutest part of this sumptuous stick was an invisible hollow screw-joint, where Barkenhead had taken the humor (from Nick's "diamond" story) to put a fine rock-crystal in. Bark said he calculated to "start an antiquity of his own;" but whether he intended to "play it" on some future spoon-man, with the sham diamond, he never told. The new ladle, on the whole, did have a rather original and distinguished appearance. The bowl, with its singular breadth of bulge, and sharpened oval, so suggestive of

an arrow-head in the stemless model, now, with the sinuous handle behind it, reminded one of the head of a living creature; and when Bark, with a glow of artistic pride, declared that the spoon looked "like a sea-serpent," Nick said yes, and wondered how nearly his guesswork had restored the real form and fashion of the old spoon of sea-faring Solomon Hardee.

All ready for the grand pageant at last! For one night certainly the Cochleareati would be the college world's ascendant stars. High-appointment men must hide their diminished heads, and subsist on self-conscious greatness. The fair public would not notice *them*. This evening white handkerchiefs, and bouquets, and gloved applause, are all for the "good fellows."

At an early hour Brinley Hall was crowded from stage to vestibule with as handsome and genteel an audience as a handsome and gen-

teel city could send. Seniors, Juniors, Sophomores, and all the Freshmen who were smart enough to get two tickets, were there with their ladies, gathered from far and near. No affair in the whole series of college exhibitions could draw such an attendance of beauty as invariably graced the Presentation of the Wooden Spoon. It was an *amusement*, and in that character of attractiveness stood alone — the “Midsummer Night’s Dream” of the university year. The whole floor of the hall, with its four hundred fluttering fans, and four hundred dainty June bonnets, and four hundred fair girl faces, looked like a great garden of breeze-blown roses. Among the “roses” sat Miss Nelly Lincoln (changed to “Nellie” now, of course), beside our friend Hardy, whose slight connection, by the way, with Park Avenue Female Seminary as one-hour-in-the-day tutor, put him under no more obligation to be shy of attending one of its

lady students than if he had been an outsider entirely.

The "Opening Load" was given on the programme as the "Overturn to the Caliph of Bag-dad," and the audience waited until they began to laugh, thinking they were sold; then the curtain rose, and they saw a little wooden ("Trojan") horse lying heels upwards, and Æneas carrying old Anchises off the stage in a sack slung over his shoulder, while Dodworth's Band finished the overture in good earnest, and brought down the house by playing "Captain Jinks of the Horse-Marines."

The "Salutatory by the Nine Muses" was then announced, and the nine Spoon-Committee men came out, all in black broadcloth pants and swallow-tails, white vests and white cravats, with little gold spoon badges on their coat lappels, and made their formal bow, standing in a row. The address was a

queer farrago in two or three languages, full of hits and puns, with enough English in it to be pretty well understood (with the aid of the abundant pantomime that accompanied it) even by the lady listeners; but the real oddity of it was, that the middle man of the nine did all the talking, and the joke of it was, that the majority of the audience did not know it. The left-end man stepped to the front, and gesticulated and moved his lips just as the first words were spoken, and continued to do so through the first paragraph of the address, when he retired behind, and the right-end man took his place, moving his arms and lips in like manner, and retiring as the first had done to give place to the next man on the left of the row; and this was kept up through all the nine divisions of the salutatory, each man taking his turn to stand directly in front of the real speaker and make the gestures, and retire behind, till the whole

nine stood in single file back to the wall, with the speaker in front. The laughter began when it got whispered about that the *apparent* speakers said nothing at all, and then, when everybody knew it, the laughter only increased because the deception was so complete.

The *bête noir* of all spoon-men is the Phi Beta Kappa Society, that ethereal order of learning's aristocracy whereinto the *élite* of every college's resultant scholarship float at graduation, and dwell in mutual apotheosis: and it is against this high fraternity, and its badge (a great, square, gold watch-key), that the satirical wit of the spoon-laureates loves to discharge its shafts, only taking care to keep within the bounds of harmless fun. In the emblem or armorial ensign of the "cochleureati," the shield bears on its lower right quarter the Phi Beta Kappa key turned wrong end up, and the motto across the

shield is, *Super sinistram iugemus*, "We feel bad over the left." Under that emblem (at the head of their programme) our waggish performers continued to bombard the scholastic aristocrats in disquisitions, songs, colloquies, pantomimes, and rubs, all the way from the ninefold salutatory to Barkenhead's reception speech, Dodworth's Band coming between in the breathing-places, applying musical salve, to set them up so that they could be knocked down again.

The first song by "We First Men" was "Clio's Gift," set to a familiar air.

"'Tis said that when the Muses
 Dwelt on Parnassian rocks,
 The lasses kept their sewing
 In old Pandora's box;
 And once, with all their gossips,
 One eve in leafy June,
 They chatted o'er their nectar,
 Stirred with a Wooden Spoon."

Minerva and several "weird sisters" come in (the song went on to say), and the talk is

on contributing prizes to encourage learning among men.

“Out spoke the hag Medusa,
 (A Gorgon foul was she,)
 ‘I for a badge of honor
 Will give Pandora’s KEY.’
 ‘That stolen badge,’ cried Clio,
 ‘Will prove a slighted boon.
 WE for a meed of merit
 Will give our Wooden Spoon.’”

The next song was sentimental, — “The Spoon-Man’s Soliloquy,” — sung to the tune of “Hazel Dell.”

“When at prizes fair I first did shy thee,
 Gemmy optic mine,
 Though full softly they went stealing by me,
 I did not repine.
 For the spoon alone it could awake me
 With its *stirring* tone,
 And I said, ‘My spoon, I’ll ne’er forsake thee!
 Fondly be mine own.’

.

In my dreams thy plated stem soft glowing
 Shone with silver flame;

Oft I marked how goblins small and knowing
Carved thereon my name," &c., &c.

Another song was a comical variation on the old Ethiopian melody, "Stop dat knockin'," representing the "ins," (pale Ph. B. K. candidates,) and the "outs," (muscular class-boys,) engaged in sharp dialogue, and a Freshman between them, like the ass between two bundles of hay. And a very laughable, musical jingle the chorus made, Charley Durkee's ringing tenor leading the teasing refrain, —

"College honors! college honors!
College honors! college honors!"

and the bottomless bass of big Heman Timothy, in recurrent short-stop, thundering, —

"Wooden Spoon!"

Of course these songs came in at judicious intervals, and I have only mentioned them together for the sake of convenience.

Hardy's part in the performance was a "Philosophical Disquisition on Noses." It was not his place to ridicule scholarship, and so, while much of his mirth-making was mildly sarcastical, the hits were only at manners and "biped miseries," and with now and then a dash of "accidental" mimicry, (for his wonderful facial and vocal talent for that had never left him.) His "Electrical Pry Prognos(e)-stick," full of wittily-warped quotations and punning points, cuffed the meddlers who stick their noses into other people's business, and singled out college bores in particular, with ludicrous directions how to know when they are coming, and how to get rid of them; and when he discussed the "nos(e)ology of turn-ups," with a great many drolly-apt illustrations from old Nos(e)tradamus, the college snobs and boarding-school flora-flimsys got the most laughable basting they had ever had in their lives. His nearest approach to prick-

ing the "high" scholars was when he pretended "to give Spinoza's diagnos(e)is of roots," and after recounting with comical gravity the different sorts of noses that would not or could not "do their own rooting," and the reasons why, fired a single squib at the "Sanskrit digs" who shut themselves up, and spend days and nights nosing out the etymology of a word through eight languages and seventeen dialects. Some parts of his speech were a *mere* play upon words, but this excited even more merriment than the rest, being more simply and immediately amusing. The readiness with which all the college boys took it, and imparted it to their fair companions, kept a breeze of mirth in motion all over the hall. This was especially so when Hardy in one passage parodied the style (and almost the very words) of a recent class lecture in metaphysics, in which the continued pronunciation of

nose made the absurdest kind of scientific sing-song. "If a man knows, how does he know that he knows? And if he knows that he knows, how does he know that he knows that he knows?" And when he had run that far enough, he made a practical application of it in the same style. "If a man knows what he knows he'll be happy. If he knows not, and knows that he knows not, he'll be tolerably comfortable. If he knows not, and knows not that he knows not, he'll be miserable." The imitation was so exact, that the professor of metaphysics would have laughed himself, if he had been there. Hardy followed this with a humorous argument to prove that there is no "wasted sweetness," and ended by saying that the earth itself would one day smell its own flowers, which prophecy he fortified with

"Nos(e) habebit humus."*

* Humorously translated, "The ground will have a nose." The Latin is a line from the old college song, "*Gaudeamus*."

I must not omit to mention the Phi Beta Kappa "colloquy," got up by Matt Calvin, which probably made more fun than anything else "down on the bill." There was slim Ned Binney standing with both his arms crooked out and in till his fingers touched his waist, making him look just like the Greek letter Phi. Next to him stood slim Will Sampson making a B of himself with one elbow and one knee. And last in the row, slimmer Bob Barkenhead (amid frantic applause) executed a K by sticking out diagonally one of his arms and one of his long legs. In that painful *pose* the three commenced to sing, in weak, squeaking voices —

"Phi Beta, the empress of honors!

Her fare is the fare for me;

She gives easy entrance to fawuers,

And I'm bound to carry the *key*.

Then strike up the trump and the clapper,

And fiddle, and big whang-jar.

Three cheers for Phi Beta Kappa,

Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

"Phi Beta, the hope of the scholar,
 The home where the tutors repair,
 I'll study and spend my last dollar
 To go and be happy there!
 Then strike, &c.

"And then, whether married or single,
 I can live on the laurels I've won:
 I'll walk where the sages commingle,
 And talk with the blue-stockings *ton*.
 Then strike," &c.

till suddenly entered three muscular cochleureates, bearing an enormous flat wooden spoon (whittled out of a clapboard), and charged upon the unlucky Greek-letter men, tumbling Barkenhead (who was quite ready to tumble by this time) over upon Sampson, and Sampson over upon Binney, and they all went down like a row of bricks, and the curtain fell.

There was more music by the band, and then came the grand Presentation, when, with much flourish of amusing oratory, *the*

spoon of the occasion was exhibited to the admiring throng, and passed from the hands of the president of the committee to those of its happy owner. The whole audience sang "*Gaudeamus*" to the thunder of the big hall organ, the doors let out the smiling, talkative crowd, and all was still. Mere description gives the reader but little idea of the brilliancy and attractions of the old annual Wooden Spoon night, looked for and enjoyed in those days with such keen pleasure and relish. The dumb picture, without the sparkling life, is all that can be transferred to the printed page.

It was late when Hardy returned to his room from Park Avenue. Sitting down, tired and drowsy, his eye fell on the ancestral relic hung on his wall, and the words of one of the evening's songs "beat time to nothing in his head":—

"In my dreams thy plated stem soft glowing
Shone with silver flame;

Oft I marked how goblins small and knowing
Carved thereon *my name.*"

He smiled, but decided to adjourn his dreaming till he was safe in bed. But by that time there were thoughts beating time to *something* in his head, and some of the anxieties of real life returned. He could carry himself along now in his studies, and probably *through* his college course, without incurring debts; but it had been his fondly cherished purpose to educate his sister Jane. It would be a proud day for him when he could place her in Park Avenue Seminary; but that day seemed no nearer than ever. Poor Jennie would have to wait. Meantime, "poor Jennie," teaching school at small wages, and with a purpose of her own, *was* waiting, bravely and patiently.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MIDNIGHT BATTLE, AND SOME STRANGE DEVELOPMENTS.

Some rocks of gold the earthquakes break;
 Sea-amber comes in storms ashore.
 Death's lightning aimed at human wreck,
 May flash from heaven one mercy more.

ANON.

HALE! Hale! Hale!"

The far, well-known cry rang out on the night air, mingled with the sougling of the trees, — the cry always raised by the students in any sudden broil with the roughs of the city, and which never failed to bring "all college" to their aid. "Hale! Hale! Hale!" Hardy sprang to his feet and listened. He had a front Senior room in North

College now, and peering from his window over the murky and dimly-lanterned campus, he could catch the sounds that came up Meeting Street and across the Common. There could be no mistake: it was the old university rally-cry. There was trouble outside.

It was late in November, and Hardy, after a vacation spent in lucrative labor, had come to the duties of his last year, and been for nearly eleven weeks devoting himself to his studies, his seminary class, and — his sister. For, discovering that she had saved a considerable sum from her little earnings, he had decided (with some trembling) to take Jane with him to New Harbor, and place her in Park Avenue School. Signs of decided improvement in the condition and spirit of his relatives at Fenwick Falls, on his brief summer visit there, had greatly pleased and cheered him. He was undertaking much; but Providence had smiled

upon him — and he was sitting to-night in his room, late at work, but with a heart at peace. The sound of war broke in upon him rudely and strangely.

“Hale! Hale! Hale!” louder and nearer it came, and he could hear voices in fierce altercation, and the rush and surge of riot in the streets. Tearing off his study-gown, he threw on his coat and cap, and ran down the stairs. Hundreds of feet were now tramping through the halls, and forth from all the entries of the old “brick row.” It was past eleven o’clock, but all college was awake and astir. Several panting Sophomores leaped into the campus, coming after their revolvers.

“What’s up, fellows?”

“Townies.”

“What *is* it?”

“Firemen — row.”

And, unable to gather any more informa-

tion, the crowd rushed on. But every one knew now pretty well what the trouble was. There had been a feud gathering for some time between students and city firemen. Some insult, when the former happened to be passing an engine-house singing college songs, had provoked it, and feelings of extreme irritation existed between the parties.

To-night fifty or sixty of the more idle and reckless of the college boys (the only sort, by the way, who ever got into serious difficulties with the "townies") had gone to the theatre in a body. They had some fresh affront to avenge, and of course their appearance in force invited hostility from the other side. The firemen, and a rabble of roughs, gathered in and around the theatre, outnumbering them four to one. The manner of the town boys and "gown boys" toward each other was not calculated to cool

bad blood. Circumstances, place, and company all combined to precipitate a fight. The captain of the police, learning the situation, came himself to the spot with an extra detail of men to try and keep the peace. By his advice the students, when the play was over, waited for the clearing of the house, and then marched out together, two by two, the officers making a lane for them through the cursing, threatening throng. They passed up the sidewalk along Meeting Street, headed by the police captain, and followed by the firemen and rowdies jeering, hooting, and occasionally throwing stones. They had gone more than half way to the college buildings, keeping their rage under discreet restraint, when, passing the Grove Street gate of the town common, their leader struck up "*Gaudeamus.*" All instantly joined in, rolling forth the song with defiant voices, and timing with their feet as they

marched. This exasperated the mob to fury, and disregarding the police, they rushed upon the sidewalk and began the battle. Then rose the college rally-cry. Savage blows fell thick on assailants and assailed, and in a moment the street was a babel of angry shouts and noises, and struggling of maddened men. When Hardy and the crowd of collegians with him reached the scene, the battle was at its height, and the crack of pistol-shots had begun to give a deadly meaning to the tumult. "Keep back! keep back!" cried the police captain, seeing them hurrying in to take sides with the assailed students. "Keep back! Fighting here can only make matters worse. Get into the college buildings, all of you, as soon as you can!" and he and his men made frantic efforts to tear the combatants apart. Suddenly two of the church-bells began to ring a fire-alarm. Some desperadoes had

broken in through the windows and got at the ropes. The rabble in the street rapidly increased in numbers — hundreds upon hundreds. More policemen arrived, but they were all too few to put the rioters down. By this time several, both of the students and the townies, were hurt, and a few quite badly (though the pistol-shots had mostly been fired into the air); but it was not till the yell of "*man killed!*" broke from the heart of the mob, as one of the rioters was seen to leap from the sidewalk and fall in the street, that there was any slacking of hostilities. Hardy had only time to see them take up the supposed dead man, and to notice how singularly like Horace Godwin one of the bearers looked, when he was hurried away by a policeman.

The exertions of the captain and his officers had secured the escape of the students during the momentary lull in the fight. That

was all they could do. The rage of the firemen and their confederates burst forth in tenfold violence. Blood had been shed by a student, and their cry now was for "revenge!" They rushed in pursuit of the college-boys, but these had, most of them, fled into "Old South," and barricaded the door. Hardy went to his room accompanied by Calvin and Whately. The mob raged and cursed, and in a minute the word went round to "get the cannon, and batter the college down." A detachment flew to the gun-house of the artillery company, broke down the door, seized two field-pieces and loaded them, and dragged them up before South College. The utmost exertions of the policemen could only prevent them from discharging the guns at once, for the wild rabble were lost to reason like so many beasts. But during the brief delay and confusion the brave officers climbed upon the

cannon and attempted to spike them, in which they partially succeeded. And now the mayor of the city arrived at the scene of the disturbance, and standing upon one of the guns, made a speech to the rioters, warning them of the consequences of violence, and promising redress where any had been wronged. But even the presence and words of the chief magistrate could not quell the blind fury of that ignorant mass of men. It remained for a Power higher than the mayor to send a stay to their desperate proceedings. A sudden fall of rain struck them while fiercely endeavoring to clear the vents of the guns, and growling with baffled hatred, they began to retire. The cannon were seized by order of the mayor and taken away, the police arrested some of the ring-leaders of the riot; and by two o'clock the streets were clear. And here we leave the great *emeute*, and its causes and the blame of it, to be settled by the courts.

Hardy, who had left his room again during the excitement at the last terrible menace of the mob, had just returned, and was undressing to snatch a forlorn chance of sleep from the waning hours of his most inquiet college night, when a knock on his door startled him. "What now, at two o'clock in the morning?" he muttered to himself in no patient mood. His visitor was Horace Godwin, the marvellous walking polyglot who had so astonished him on the evening of Junior Exhibition. Hardy had no wish to see him. He had begun to think of Godwin as destitute of character, prodigy though he was in learning. He knew he had lost the place which his efforts had procured for him. Without character, though he spoke the tongues of angels, Godwin became to him a mere unaccountable wizard of words. His suspicion that he had seen him among the rioters did not prepossess him any more in his

favor. A man who kept such company — But Hardy did not take the time thinking all this that I take in telling it. All reflections that might have found room in his mind at another time were now resolved into the single wonder what in the world Godwin wanted.

“I believe I saw you some two hours ago, Mr. Godwin,” he said.

“If you mean in this unfortunate affair of the riot, yes,” replied Godwin with perfect courtesy. “I was a passer-by, on the sidewalk, when the students came out, and an astonished witness when the trouble began. A man was hurt, and I gave my assistance.”

“He was not *killed*, then,” said Hardy, quickly.

“No. But I must hasten to my errand. This man now lies in the hospital, in a dying condition, as the surgeons fear. The stab was a deep and dangerous one, and it will be a wonder if —”

“A *stab!* I supposed the man was *shot!*” cried Hardy.

“No; a sword-cane stab, clear as a lancet-cut. But to my errand. This man gave his name as ‘Silas Hardy,’ and knowing you, and prompted perhaps by something in his appearance, I named you to him, when he immediately expressed an eager wish to see you. He says he is *your brother*. It may be all a mistake, but I could do no less than carry the request of a man who believes himself to be dying. Good night, sir.”

If Hardy had been called upon to describe the revulsion in his feelings at that moment, he would have needed a month of recollection. Half stunned with surprise, and shame, and fear, and wounded affection, he moved mechanically about, and before he really knew what he was doing he found himself dressed and wrapped, and walking out into the wet and windy darkness. No.

sleep for Nicholas Hardy that night. Would there be any more sleep for Silas Hardy till he slept the sleep that knows no waking?"

Nicholas reached the hospital none too soon. Only the fact that the wounded man was calling for him procured him admission to his bedside. Gazing at the bearded, rough-looking patient, it seemed to him that (as Godwin hinted) there must be some absurd mistake, — he *hoped* there was. He could catch no resemblance, nor recognize a single feature that he had ever known; and though the man's hollow eyes rested on him longingly, he heaved a deep breath of relief as he persuaded himself that none of his own flesh and blood lay there. Then, with a strange gleam of intelligence in his face, the patient put out his hand. Nicholas came nearer, and leaned over him. He must say something.

"Are you my brother Silas?"

The man slowly turned over his right hand that lay in Nicholas' own, and pointed with the forefinger of his left to a long scar across the knuckles. It was the mark of a severe hurt that Silas had received in the mill when he was a boy. Nicholas gazed, and grew sick at heart. This, then, *was* his lost brother! — restored to him only when stricken with death, and in a street brawl, too! How could he prepare him for his end? Was there a chaplain at the hospital? In sorrowful haste he tried to select a few fit words, bending closer to the pallid face, where his eye now began to trace some of the old tokens. But the signs of fatal faintness showed him that it was too late. Poor Silas made a convulsive effort to speak, but the three words "Search — my — clothes," were all that Nicholas could seize. Medical aid summoned back a little life at last, but the sufferer awoke wild and incoherent.

Nicholas remained till sunrise. It was astonishing, the superintending surgeon said, that the man survived so long such fearful loss of blood. A search of Silas' clothes revealed the mark of his name, a little money, a hotel check, a seven-barrelled shooter, and two little bags of gold-dust sewed inside the lining of his waistband. There were other pocket-trifles, but more suggestive than valuable. Taken with other hints babbled in his delirium, they confessed to a manner of life of which no man could be proud. At sunrise the patient fell into a slumber, and when Nicholas inquired, the surgeon told him there might be time to go and bring his sister.

The heavy tidings startled and grieved Jane more than it had himself. The riot of the previous night had excited Park Avenue school, as all the rest of the city, and many eager questions were asked; but, save the

Principal (whom it was wisest to inform "in confidence" at once), none learned that the "man killed" in the Meeting Street fray was a brother of Jane and Nicholas Hardy. Their standing could suggest no connection with a midnight brawler who happened to bear their family name, and the newspapers did not take the trouble to identify his visitors at the hospital.

It was nine o'clock when the brother and sister stood together by Silas' bedside. They found him alive, and rational, though exceedingly weak; and the surgeon, as much surprised as they, ventured to say that he had "some hope of him." "*With an unimpaired constitution,*" he remarked aside to Nicholas, with a meaning look, "I could freely predict now that so young and naturally strong a man would pull through."

The interview was necessarily a short one, and the patient could not be allowed to

talk, but his pleasure at meeting Nicholas and Jane, and knowing that they were both in the city, and that he would be in a manner under their care, soothed him in his helplessness, and made more nearly possible his physical recovery — and his *moral* recovery, too.

As the brother and sister were leaving the hospital they were met by the aged clergyman whom Nicholas first saw at the “Fairhope Quarterly.” He was not a regular hospital chaplain, but he made frequent visits to this and similar places, carrying words of holy counsel and consolation, and everywhere welcomed as a man of God. Nicholas greeted him warmly, introduced his sister, and immediately explained their errand, and confided to him their unhappy brother’s case. Both they and Silas had reason for thanksgivings, afterwards, to the kind destiny which brought this reverend man and the sick prodigal together.

Christmas came, and New Year's — and Silas Hardy not only lived, but took nourishment, and was able to sit up in bed, and read a little, and talk. During all the tedious weeks, while his soul and body clung together by a thread, Jane and Nicholas tended him alternately, every hour of their time out of study, watching with him by night when he was at the worst, and lightening his weary and remorseful convalescence with many ministries of love and hope. His mother, who was early sent for, had been to see him, and also two of his sisters, from Fenwick Falls; but staying in New Harbor would be expensive for them, and when the promise of Silas' recovery seemed fair, they were content to be assured that Nicholas and Jane could sufficiently care and provide for him.

By degrees, as he was able, the returned wanderer told the story of his life during his

long absence, and as his heart opened and softened to kind attentions and purifying influences, he confessed his many wrecks, and owned his humiliation at leaving his youth behind him, a wasted opportunity. For two years he had followed the sea, and then, infatuated with ideas of sudden wealth, went to the Nevada gulches to hunt for gold. But the daily contact with drunkards and gamblers developed his worst instincts, and all the gold he gathered he lost in dissipation and play. He hired himself out as a machinist at high wages, and could have made himself rich, but an insane faith in luck tempted him to the faro banks, till his money was gambled away as fast as he made it. He would not write to his friends and kin till he could astonish them with tidings of his great fortune, and waiting for this he had never written at all. He had his fits of compunction and self-disgust, when he could

see clearly how deeply his habits of drinking and gaming debased him, and how they kept him from getting on in the world; and repeatedly he had sworn to mend, but the return of opportunity and temptation only proved his weakness the same. At last, resolving to flee the country and begin a wandering life again, he had accumulated a little gold by running a quartz-mill at the mines, and managing to keep this, made his way to the coast, where he shipped as a common sailor. Landing in New York, he had wasted his ship-money in a week of fast living, and then recklessly embarked on a boat, going he neither knew nor cared where. He had found himself in New Harbor with next to nothing left besides the two little bags of dust stitched in his clothing. His night at the theatre with a gang of new drinking-companions had ended well-nigh in sending him to a deathbed.

“See me here,” he said sadly, “a wreck at twenty-seven! Ah, Nick, it was always with you and I as with ‘Seth and Tim,’ in the ‘Loafer’s Lament’ in the old reading-book:

‘Seth, night and day, drank knowledge in,
And stored his mind from near and far,
While I—learned how to guzzle gin,
And how to pick a good cigar.’

And this is what it has brought me to. Many a time I have undertaken to reform, and started with a desperate burst of virtue, but I came out worse than ever, every time. This last blow has brought me where I know my soundings. It’s either kill or cure now.”

“God grant the *cure!*” said Nicholas.

I have carried my hero through several surprises — astonishments, in fact — since his college life began; but they were all short mysteries, soon explained. I am going to relate a mystery now, for which there is no

explanation — at present. Returning from the hospital New Year's evening, Nicholas stopped at the post-office and took out a letter directed to him in an unknown hand, containing a check, to his order, for five hundred dollars! Nick was non-plussed now, utterly and hopelessly. The check was drawn on a New York bank, and signed with a name he had never heard of. Was it a *sell* on him? Was it a forgery, or a trick to implicate him in one? Was it meant for Silas instead of himself, and sent there by some "honorable" rascal of his acquaintance to pay an old gambling debt? Was it a downright, bona fide New Year's present from some friend who had taken a round-about way to hide his tracks? And then he fell to work to think up all his probable and possible friends. He went that very evening to see Miss Tabitha Magraw; but she laughed, congratulated him, and disclaimed all knowledge of it. Next

day he found out that there *was* such a bank as the one named on the check, and then he hunted up the only bank in the city that had business with it (the old "Tradesmen's"), and the cashier told him the check was a genuine one. So it was not a "sell." He carried the check to Silas, but Silas knew nothing about it. "Keep it, Nick," he said. "Jack's 'cherub that sits up aloft,' sent it to pay you for taking care of me."

He directed a letter to "Paul Jellaby," the signer, and "Paul Jellaby" wrote back, kindly stating who he was, but adding, provokingly, "Beyond this I can give you no information. I received orders and forwarded the check accordingly." Of course that ended all question of a "forgery."

Nick wrote to Squire Gammel next, but the squire could give him no hint. Then he wrote to Dr. Pliny Norcross. The old doctor frankly confessed his ignorance of

the whole thing, and only suggested, in his peculiar way, "*Didn't I tell you that old wooden spoon would bring you luck?*"

Nick did not know where to make any more inquiries, and he gave it up. This was the way, then, that he was to have solved for him the problem of his sister's education and his own, and of his new responsibility with his ne'er-do-well brother! But somehow he did not like to use that check; it felt in his fingers like goblin-money. He would rather know whom he was beholden to. He deposited the five hundred dollars in the Tradesmen's Bank, and concluded to let it alone.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH NICK STRAIGHTENS OUT THINGS.

“And you may make, by means like these,
Five talents ten whene'er you please.”

BESIDES his relatives and the excellent old chaplain, Silas Hardy had but one other visitor while he lay in the hospital, and that one only occasionally. The “pot-companions” of his theatre night had kept shy of him since he got into trouble, but Horace Godwin seemed to have conceived a friendship for the wounded young sailor. This was, perhaps, owing chiefly to the fact that during his wanderings Silas had picked up Spanish enough to be able to converse with him in that tongue, and had once stopped a short time in England, Godwin's native

country. Nicholas, with his present ideas of what Godwin was, suspecting rather a sympathy of appetites and habits, was at first inclined to think that, for two such men to be together, even "occasionally" was too often. He kept his misgivings to himself, however; and he was less disposed to complain when he saw that Godwin amused and entertained his brother, for the man's wonderful information, and versatility, and conversational gift, made him charming company for any who cared to *listen* more than talk. Still, knowing his brother's weakness, he disliked to see him brought at all under the influence of one superior to himself, whose free and somewhat "bohemian" notions of life rendered him so unsafe a friend. That the Englishman had shown his brother humane attention in the hour of his injury might be used as a privilege and give him greater personal claim and power. He

dreaded to think of Silas going forth into the city, sound and well again, and being met and greeted by Godwin with an invitation to drink a glass of wine. It would be better for Silas to die as he was, than to be thus enticed and unmanned again when his better nature had begun to triumph. Everything depended, for some time to come, on the influences he would follow, and the company he would keep. Once more tempted astray and given to evil, his moral renewal (so it seemed to Nicholas) would be beyond hope. Poor Silas would go down lower than ever,

“Chained to excess, the slave of each extreme,”

till overtaken by the inevitable ruin.

Horace Godwin was not a drunkard; but his principles were not of the kind to strengthen and save weak Silas Hardy.

This uneasiness continued to disturb Nicholas as often as the singular man visited his

brother and stayed to talk with him; and whenever they spoke in Spanish, he felt the more uncomfortable because he could not take part in the conversation, nor understand anything that was said. Under other circumstances he would have smiled at his own jealousy. But his feeling now was something deeper than the mere selfish wish to have his brother all to himself. He had set his heart on saving his brother, and his sensitive watchfulness could neither be wondered at nor blamed. What could he do with Godwin? Could he hope to change his principles? Could he find him occupation again and gain a hold upon him by a new claim of gratitude? Could he by any means get him out of the city? Or should he get his brother out of the city, and out of his way? He finally thought of Dr. Norcross, and, though with no very clearly defined idea of what he expected to accomplish, he wrote

the old physician a letter, saying, "I've got a man here whom you would like to talk with, a prodigy of ancient learning," &c., &c. And following this was an account, in some detail, of Godwin's marvellous accomplishments, his nationality, his academic parentage, and his precarious life in this country as a "scholar of fortune."

The time came when Silas Hardy must leave the hospital and be provided for elsewhere. "It has been a snug harbor to me here. Keep a look-out for my poor craft when I am outside," he said to the chaplain the day before his discharge.

"That I shall," replied the good old man, "but don't forget to keep your own look-out, my son. There'll be pirates afloat, and I hope you'll give *them* a wide berth; but you can't always expect fair weather and a smooth sea.

‘ . . . When the wave and the gale
Are around and above, if your footing should fail,
If your eye should grow dim, and your caution depart,
Look aloft, and be firm and be fearless of heart.’”

“I’ll promise it! A thousand thanks for your friendship!” exclaimed Silas with much feeling, grasping the chaplain’s hand.

With considerable pains Nicholas had made an arrangement by which his brother and sister could take lodgings, at moderate expense, in a locality where Jane could still reach her daily recitations, and not be too wearied after the little necessary “household cares.” Boarding themselves in this way, she and Silas could help each other, and the saving made by Jane’s withdrawal from her more costly quarters at the school would nearly pay their rent. She was healthy and strong, and being no stranger to hard work, she did not mind the extra exertion, especially when she thought of the good it

would do, for she was quite as heartily interested as Nicholas in providing for the restored brother's safety. Of course the little that Silas had with him was made available in money, and this was sufficient to support him for a few weeks till he should be able to earn something again.

"If you can't get along without me," said Nicholas gayly, when they were nicely settled, "I'll come and board here myself."

And in the meantime he charged himself so far with the care of Silas' future, as to watch and inquire for openings, and make every effort to procure him a situation.

Silas Hardy was a changed man. The entirely new life to which he had been introduced, and the charm of a *home* attraction — which till now he had never really known — seemed to wean him completely from his wild longings and his vicious tastes. His good resolutions, too, were stronger and deeper than his benefactors knew.

“This is more heaven on earth than a vagabond deserves,” he said to Jane, surveying the pretty fitting-up she had given to their little rooms. “I went into the hospital to die, but I am a live man yet,—no small thanks to Nick and you! If ever a fellow had a real resurrection in this world, it’s I, Jennie. I am an ungrateful dog if it doesn’t prove my *double* resurrection.”

Nicholas brought him books, and he spent most of his days of gaining health in reading. This was a genuine novelty of enjoyment to him, and at first he was like a delighted boy over it. So the rest of winter passed, and half the spring. Then his brother began to take walks with him, and several times in Nick’s college-room he met the latter’s two favorite classmates, Matt Calvin and Bart Whately. They were greatly pleased with him, for, besides being a handsome man, reformed in appearance and dress as well

as in habits, his knowledge of the world, and his exhaustless store of anecdotes and personal adventures, made him very entertaining. That he was the man stricken down by the student's dagger-blow, in the street-riot the previous fall, they never guessed.

At length, when he felt his health and vigor almost complete, Silas began to chafe. He was not one who could long endure the confinement of a student's life; his muscular energy craved fuller play. It became useless to try to occupy his mind with reading, or poring over his Spanish. Even whittling curious ornaments of furniture for his sister's room ceased to divert him. That might do for a sick man, but he was no longer a sick man. So one day he put on his sailor clothes, and went off to the wharves on an exploring tour. Jane was somewhat concerned not to see him home at dinner, and in the afternoon, when Nicholas came to his

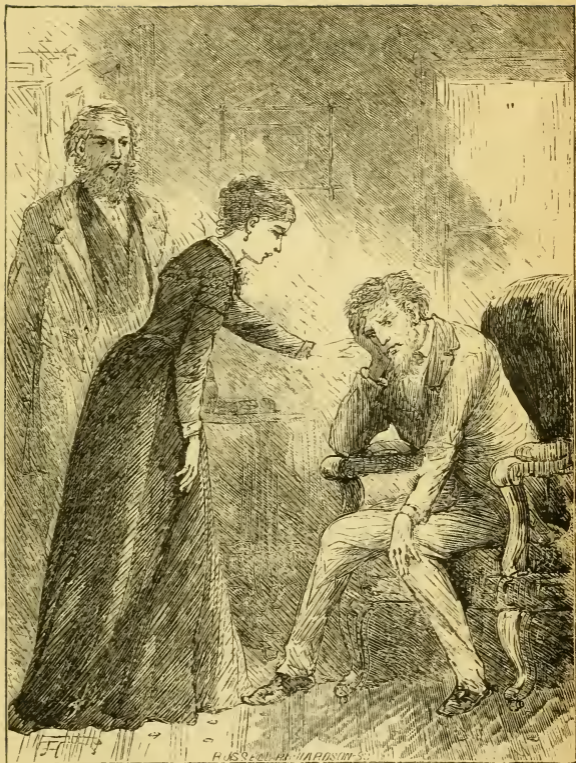
seminary class, she inquired if he knew where he was. Nicholas had talked with Silas about obtaining work, but nothing definite had been fixed upon, and he had not discovered how impatient his brother was. He told Jane that he had probably gone after employment, and he believed he would come home all right, but he thought he should have notified her. At nightfall he went to Jane's lodgings, not without a slight feeling of uneasiness; but very soon after his arrival Silas came home. He was pretty tired, and there were sooty traces on his hands and face, notwithstanding an evident attempt to wash himself. The look his brother and sister gave him as he entered brought out a smile which ran over in a quiet laugh at some remark of Jane. He had been down among the stevedores unloading coal! He retired long enough to give himself a thorough scrubbing and

change his dress, and then re-entering, he threw himself, with a long sigh, into an easy-chair by the supper-table.

“Why, how fatigued you look!” said both Nicholas and Jane.

“Fatigued and happy. I’ve found something to do,” replied Silas.

Nicholas made a simple inquiry, and learned that his brother had arranged to be permanently employed at the wharves. He did not betray his dissatisfaction at this news, but talked it over quietly with him while he ate his supper, and by the time he had finished, and lain down on the lounge, it did not need much logic to make him own that he was still entirely unfit for the hard labor he had been doing that day. But Nicholas had more to say. To discuss the company his brother should keep required some diplomacy. Wheeling the easy-chair to the side of the lounge, he seated him-



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self in it, and elevated his feet quite comfortably upon a camp-stool, as if he intended to spend the evening in hearing and telling stories.

“ You ought to rest *three weeks* yet,” said he. And with that and similar sympathetic remarks by way of preamble, like a skilful lawyer he laid out his ground, Jane putting in an occasional word from where she sat with comb and brush, coaxing the last dust out of Silas’ hair and beard. He led the conversation over the past, recalling incidents both sad and glad, in what seemed a most desultory way, but drawing from his brother the very expressions he wished to hear, till they naturally came to talk of his sudden appearance in New Harbor and the strange providence of their meeting, of the long waiting between life and death, the debt of his happy recovery, the resolutions of his sick and suffering hours, and the better

reason that these should be *kept* than that they should ever have been made. Silas spoke freely and earnestly, and sometimes Nicholas gave him the largest share of the dialogue. They talked of their friend the venerable clergyman, and reviewed all they knew of the good and the bad in Horace Godwin, accounting with perfect agreement for his waste of his splendid possibilities, and echoing each other's thought that a single careless weakness could ruin a life and make an angel fall. An ingenious suggestion from Nicholas turned the point and made the application personal again, and unconscious of condemning his own late choice, Silas admitted that the safety of his heart depended largely on where he put his head.

"Just so," said Nicholas. "A head with the tiger's scar on it is too wise to go into the lion's mouth, I should think."

"But," said Silas, a little nettled to find

how he had been argued up to a confession of his foolishness, "I can't be idle; I'd rather die than —"

"You said, just now, you had better have died than to *run any more risks*," interrupted Nicholas.

"Well, have it your way. I suppose I'm caught," said Silas.

"Idleness is bad enough, goodness knows," continued Dick, "but, for a new-reformed man, between idleness and *work in bad company*, it's a choice between the devil and the deep sea. Some of those Manson Wharf stevedores were concerned in the November riot. I wonder you weren't recognized down there."

"I *was*. How in the world did you guess that?" exclaimed Silas, laughing.

"I didn't guess," said Nick, "but it's natural to suppose that when a man goes to Turkey he'll find Turks."

“There were two of them that knew me,” continued Silas, “and at noon-lunch they insisted on treating me to whiskey; but I neither drank, nor felt an inclination to drink with them. But *you are right*, Nick! I acknowledge I felt ashamed of my company, and a burnt brand should keep away from the fire. I’ll quit wharf-work, and wait for something to turn up.”

“Something *has* turned up,” laughed Nicholas.

And then he went on, with perhaps more proud pleasure than he had ever felt before in his life, to tell him his plan. How different this (he thought as he glanced at his listening brother’s face) from the Silas of four months ago! of four years, six years—yes, *ten* years ago! That very day Nicholas had learned of an excellent situation which would be open the 10th of May (three weeks later), in a large machine-shop. The proprietor to

whose favor, as the husband of one of the ladies of her Fair-hope Band, "the countess" Magraw had paved the way for her student friend, was a prominent manufacturer of the city, a gentleman of high character, who employed in his business none but "temperance men." Nicholas proposed that his brother should see Mr. Lego the next day, secure the place, and then spend the intervening time, or a part of it, in a visit at Fenwick Falls. "We three can make up a purse for that trip, and not break us," he said pleasantly.

Silas was too grateful to offer any objection to this. He lay thinking, while the delighted Jane, still smoothing his hair, conversed about the plan in low tones with her younger brother. The city clocks struck nine, and Nicholas went out softly, leaving Silas asleep.

Horace Godwin had not appeared to our

friends for more than two months, and Nicholas began to think of the "absurd letter" (as he chose to call it) which he had written to Dr. Norcross. Was it possible that any notice had been taken of it? His doubts were set at rest when one day, just after Silas had left the city for Fenwick Falls, he received a long letter from the old doctor full of amusing and extravagant happiness.

"Your friend Godwin is an Admirable Crichton, a Mezzofanti, a second Dr. Parr, a masculine Scheherazade, an incarnate Arabian Night, a whole classical library in trousers!" so the old man ran on. . . . "I have got him a place in the Hightown Academy — a chartered institution now, by the way, (been growing ever since you gave it a start,) with an upper and lower grade, and three teachers." Godwin is Assistant in Languages (that's what they call it); but don't he make the Principal and Pre-

ceptress stare! He can make grammar for himself if the book comes short, and he can beat Virgil on his own Latin! . . . He has been here six weeks, and I've been pumping him all that time, but, land o' Homer! he's a living spring, and as fresh to-day as ever! . . . Godwin boards with me, and we sit up all night, sometimes, talking and disputing on the Æolic Digamma, and the verbs in *Mi*. . . . How in wonder did this magician happen to come to you, you young Aladdin? I shall lay it to the luck of the Wooden Spoon! You must have rubbed that old bowl one day, and called the fellow up," &c., &c., &c.

Nick read the letter through, and laid it down, laughing heartily. Then he commented, growing half serious.

"It is fortunate that I got that strange being out of the city so soon. Such a fearfully gifted genie might have laid a spell on Silas."

However well-founded Nick's misgivings of danger to his brother from Godwin's influence may have been, it is certain (as he afterwards knew) that there was but *one* secret understanding between the two men. Horace Godwin was a witness to the stabbing of the sailor Silas Hardy, on the night of the riot. Welcomed for his fascinating abilities and marvellous learning to the company of college boys, and to the convivialities of a certain set, he had become acquainted with many of them, and he knew the one who gave the dagger-thrust. Probably he was the only man outside of college who knew. It was of this knowledge, and the possible use of it, that he and Silas were speaking when they conversed together in Spanish. It was agreed by them that nothing should be said. And so, when the legal investigation of the matter was made, not a witness could be found. It was not till after the author

of the deed had left college (without his diploma) and was a thousand miles away, that Silas told his brother in confidence the name of the Southern student, one of Nick's own class, who, "in self-defence," had so nearly made an end of him.

The Hardys at Fenwick Falls gave their wanderer a genuine, homespun greeting when he came among them again, and when he saw how honestly glad they were, he realized that it was better to return humble than to return rich. But what a change since he went away! Sue and Phœbe matrons with children of their own; Annette married; Sally, the careless romp, grown to a trim and tidy young woman, and already "spoken" to a certain farmer's son with prospects; the boy Jerry a foot taller, and fledged into a fine beau; father and mother good-humored, portly, and comfortable; the

house neat, and painted, and *peaceable*, with a clean garden and a new fence! It seemed to Silas as if every one of the family, and every *thing* in and around the old dwelling, had somehow ripened out of ragged and reckless childhood since he saw them last. Where had all the wrinkled worry, and noisy bickering and snarling gone? He was pleased, too, to hear how every one quoted brother Nick. It was "Nick didn't" or "wouldn't like this," or "Nick thought we had better do that," or "Nick advised us to have such-and-such," or "Nick wants it to be so-and-so," or "Nick says," or "Nick knows," or "Nick will," or "Nick can;" and evidently brother Nick was the oracle of the family.

Saul Hardy, looking with pride on his handsome son Silas, and listening to him with wonder while he smoked his pipe, broke out once, in spite of himself, and told how it was.

“Wife, here’s some more o’ Nick’s work!”

“Nick’s and Jane’s,” said Silas, knowing that his father meant him, and that he knew what he had been.

“Yes; and Jane is his work, too, pretty much — only in a different way. Used to call him the scamp o’ the whole brood, but I’ll be hanged if he ain’t the missionary, and we needed one.”

“What say you to a holiday sail?” asked Matt Calvin of Nicholas one beautiful day in early May, soon after Silas returned from his visit.

“Just the thing,” replied Nicholas, “if we can get the right kind of a party. Bart will go, won’t he?”

“No; he’s shut up, working out prize problems — the old dig!”

“Well, I’ve worked all winter on my prize problems,” laughed Nicholas, “and I deserve

a day out. So little recreation as I've given myself for the last five months, a snatch of sport will be a godsend."

"You're right, Prince Hal," quoth Calvin, ever ready with his Shakspeare.

'If all the year were playing holidays,
To play would be as tedious as to work;
But now, what seldom comes unlooked for comes,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents!'"

And so, to make a long story short, a sailing party was made up for that afternoon, consisting of Calvin, Nicholas, his brother Silas, his sister Jane, and two of her intimate friends from the seminary, one of which was Miss Nellie Lincoln. They took fishing-tackle with them, and a plain bread lunch and some simple culinary conveniences, intending to land at Salton Rock and fry fish. Silas managed the boat, and in his skilful hands it went down the harbor like a sea-bird. Jane, with Calvin's help,

succeeded in hauling in a splendid blue-fish, for which exploit she was extravagantly applauded. But luck was rather coquettish to the rest, and when waiting for bites became too slow sport, the party sailed gayly round to Salton Rock, and went ashore for their little picnic.

They made a merry dinner, and then so fast consumed their sociable but uneventful time, clambering, running, picking lichens, and hunting for hepaticas in the grove, that when Silas called them together again they could hardly believe it was time to go.

"There's going to be a fog," said he, "otherwise we could stay for the moon-shine."

They all went down to the landing, Nicholas watching his brother's face. Before they embarked he whispered to him, "If there's any risk we'd better go home on the cars," glancing at the ladies. But Silas thought

there was no danger if they got off at once; and very soon the party were in the boat and at sea again, Nicholas at the tiller, Silas holding the boom-guy, and Calvin and the girls stowed amidships.

“Hard-a-lee!” shouted Silas to Nick.

“Hardy lee!” laughed Calvin and the girls, and away they went, singing:

“Where Pollux sails and Castor steers,
We'll fly and float a hundred years.”

The homeward sailing was not so swift and easy, for they worked to windward, luffing and tacking all the way back to the harbor mouth; but they got along bravely, singing college-songs (which the ladies knew perfectly well), or shouting with laughter at Calvin's jokes, till the fog began to thicken. Rapidly, alarmingly, all over sea and shore gathered the mantling mist, and the day grew dark, for the sun was almost down. They

rounded the headland, and Silas was getting his last bearings to run in, when the wind suddenly seemed to shift, almost jibing the sail in spite of him, and then it died away entirely. There was a scream from one of the ladies. The jaw-rope had caught her back-hair. Calvin, incautiously jumping up, had his hat knocked off by the boom. At that moment a roaring sound to seaward turned every head abaft, and they saw glaring through the fog the headlight of a great steamboat! It was bearing directly down upon them, and they could not get out of the way!

“She don’t see us!” cried Silas. “We must *raise a fire* somehow!”

There was a hurried search for paper, but not a piece could be found. Despair sat on every face. The steamer would certainly sink them.

“Give me a match, quick!” shrieked Nellie

Lincoln, at the same instant snapping a cord in some mysterious part of her dress. The great steamer came thundering on — almost upon them! Silas, Calvin, and Nick yelled “ahoy! ahoy!” at the top of their voices, but just then a bright blaze shot up from the little boat, and they heard the clang of the steamer-pilot’s bell. The engine was reversed, the great wheels backed water, but the momentum carried the black bows almost over the little sailboat where Nellie stood on one of the thwarts waving her blazing torch in the face of death. They were saved.

When all danger was past, and they were out of the way of larger craft, working up to the regatta-wharf with a hatful of wind, the reaction from fear to joy awakened the silenced voices of the fair passengers, and they broke into half hysterical screams of laughter. The idea of a lady’s bustle

stopping a steamboat! Was there ever anything so droll?

“. . . What seldom comes unlooked-for comes,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents,”

said Nicholas, quoting back to Calvin. “You are a brave girl, Nellie,” he added aside to the heroine of the moment, “you are good for both storm and calm.”

The rest of the party heard it, and would have given three cheers, but Nellie told them to stop their noise.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN SIGHT OF THE LAST MILE-STONE.

“Fast flew the weeks : on golden wheels of ease,
By classic turnpike, through Pierian trees,
The lazy Seniors rode to their degrees.”

THIS interesting tristich appeared one evening in the “Nipper,” a saucy semi-occasional sheet, through the medium of whose columns the unterrified democracy of the college got their opinions and observations into print. Now that the premonitory thunders of campaign time had begun to rumble again, it came out every week. The next issue contained the same, and three lines more printed under them.

“With logic spread to cheat the college-guards,
In sanctum, or upon the grassy yards,
The Juniors wrote love-letters, and played cards.”

This was presumably a return shot, and as it left the parties pretty even, the thing was not personal enough to go further. But the next week's issue suggested that some sore Freshman had been aching for a good opportunity to hit off his old "hazing" enemies.

"In horrid club-den, and by college-door,
Singing old didos, or debating more,
The window-breaking Sophomores smoked and swore."

And promptly, under a reprint of this triplet, came out; the following week:

"Tortured by these in Learning's noble cause,
The Freshmen chased the bell with books in paws,
Or hid themselves, and crammed the college laws."

This sort of caricature, good-naturedly taken by one college class from another, becomes a slander when repeated, as it too often is, for a *true* description of student life and character at our universities. The career

of Nicholas Hardy, who certainly was not a "lazy" Senior, nor a shirking Junior, nor a wicked Sophomore, nor a foolish Freshman, is by no means an exception. So far from being an uncommon student, his likes and equals are much more numerous than his unlikes and inferiors. The *exceptions* are those few whose want of principle and self-respect unfits them to be in college, or anywhere else save in a penitentiary. Such are generally weeded out of their class before graduation, if not before Senior year. There are some who fall out by inability to keep pace with their fellows in scholarship, some who shorten or cripple their course by sentimental entanglements; some who incur discipline through sheer thoughtlessness, or boyish excess of fun; many who take no "honors"; but the cynical critic must find worse representatives than these to justify his judgment that the average college student

is a scamp. The example of Nicholas Hardy is set before boys and young men who are looking forward to a liberal course of study, with the assurance that in college they can imitate his manliness, his pure-mindedness and honest purpose, and even his struggles with indigence and discouraging home connections, and find plenty of good company. And from this I go on again with my hero's story.

Nicholas counted it his best Senior triumph to be the winner of one of the five Hamilton prizes. These were bestowed for distinguished excellence, not in the occult sciences, not in Latin or Greek, but in the English language, the mother-tongue of eighty living millions, in which our future lawyer expected to do his life-work and win his influence and reputation among men. He had the more reason to be proud of this triumph because he had been obliged to

finish his prize treatise with the trouble of his brother on his mind, and the care of him on his hands; and to accomplish it all without lowering his scholarly standing was no ordinary victory. He had worked hard — fatiguingly, exhaustingly hard, — but it paid. To be a Hamilton prize-man was to carry a kind of high official indorsement to his practical talents, and to his general culture as well; for all his classic and scientific drill had contributed to, and showed itself in, the style and richness of the language which was to be his instrument of usefulness and power. Possessing this, he could be content to let others bear away the medal for Eloquence, the Resident Scholarships, the Astronomical premiums, and the class honors of Editor, Orator, Poet, and Historian. Of the class historian and his duties I shall have more to say before this chapter ends.

“Did you ever find out who sent you that five hundred dollar check?” asked Silas of his brother shortly after his return from home. He had begun work in Mr. Lego’s machine-shop, but still boarded with his sister, and Nicholas was at their lodgings, on one of his frequent calls.

“No,” said Nicholas. “Why, have you learned anything new?”

He had long half mistrusted that Miss Tabitha Magraw had some intelligence, or at least some *theory* about that singular matter, beyond what she chose to disclose. He could not forget her telling him that she had “written to the Hanfords,” and that she had found papers in the old cabinet which no one but herself should see.

“While I was at home,” said Silas, “I met and talked with a man who said his name was Gaines.”

“I know Mr. Gaines,” said Nicholas.

“Yes; he said he knew you, and that you saved his boy’s life.”

“And he sent me a hundred dollars,” said Nicholas, beginning to think rapidly. Was it possible here was a clue to this last mystery?

“He didn’t represent it in just that way,” said Silas. “He was a poor man then, only an overseer, but he went to the mill-owners about it, he said,* and they made up a purse. There was one of them that he called Mulford, I believe, who gave more than any one else. [Nicholas’ thoughts travelled from Fenwick to Colebridge in a twinkling.] He said he wished it had been *five* hundred instead of one hundred; and then it came handy to tell him there’d been a check sent you for just that sum. I looked at him sharp, and I thought he appeared a good

* See “Nick Hardy,” p. 231.

deal more pleased than surprised. 'I wish it had been a *thousand*,' says he. Gaines is superintendent now, and I guess he's rich."

But Nicholas' mind was on a very different track from the one Silas had struck. Mr. Gaines was *not* rich. If he *had* been, doubtless he would gladly have sent his young benefactor five hundred dollars, — or a thousand dollars, — and in a less roundabout way than through a real-estate broker in New York. Some eccentric hand had managed that affair. Nicholas had no personal knowledge of Mr. Mulford beyond the short and curious acquaintance on the boat between Fenmouth and Nohannic, but he had jumped to the conclusion at once that this gentleman and Mulford the mill-owner were one and the same. He did not know (what was the fact) that Mr. Mulford knew who he was when he intrusted him with the money

and letter to Colebridge. He did not know that he was entirely at fault in thinking that the mysterious check might be Mr. Mulford's gift at all. Of course he could not know that it came from the last man in the world whom he had any reason to suppose cared for him or owed him good will. He had built an hypothesis, but it was a good deal like the cosmogony that rested the globe on an elephant that stood on a turtle that stood on nothing. And the old "countess," whom he saw a few days after, only perplexed him more by suggesting that the check was conscience-money from some wrongful possessor of an inheritance that ought to have been his (Hardy's), dating back before the Gartney will was written. But she promised to make inquiries, and help him satisfy his curiosity.

An unimportant incident of this last call at Miss Tabitha's was a discovery of wedding

preparations going on. Nicholas had scarcely "seen Sidney" for nearly a year; nor had the old question been asked him by Sidney's mother; for the Helpmeats had dissolved, with the kindest feelings towards Mrs. Hin-nipick, and, with some changes in the membership, had organized a co-operative boarding association, called the "Eta Pi Club," of which Nicholas was steward. So that both he and they had quite forgotten to charge themselves with Sidney's movements and localities, or to make fun of his love affairs. Nicholas had no doubt, however, that Margaret Granger was now about to make the young man a happy benedict; and he would not have thought of the matter again but for the merry flutter he found the Seminary girls in, one day, over a "beautiful serenade" that they, or some one of them in particular, had been honored with the night before. There were five of the tuneful youths

who had come to the gate, and they sung, O, so splendidly! and it was such a treat! But there was one who stepped inside the yard, and played the guitar, and sung a song, and it was so exquisitely sweet! and some of the words were —

“The gloom that winter cast
How soon the heart forgets
When summer brings at last
Her sun that never sets!
So dawned my love for you;
So fixed through joy and pain,
Than summer sun more true:
'Twill never set again.”

And then the rest sung in chorus with him; and the quartette had such lovely voices too! And the young man stood there singing and playing as much as a quarter of an hour; and he had long hair, and the moon shone down on his elegant little boot; and some of the girls knew him, and said it was Mr. Sidney Hinnipick, the organist at St.

John's, and one girl threw him a bouquet out of her window ; and they knew it was Emma Crosby, and he was engaged to her, or going to be : and it was all too dearly, delightfully romantic for anything !

Nicholas was vastly amused with this pretty nonsense ; but he kept his own knowledge of the gallant guitar-player to himself. So Sidney was off with the old love, and on with the new ! Probably Miss Margaret had found out her mistake. Perhaps they both had. If he had "seen Sidney" as often as in the old days, he might have known by his looks that Miss Margaret "found out her mistake" eight months ago, and that a certain young merchant from Colebridge had helped her find it out.

When Senior "Biennial" was over, and Presentation-Day came, Nicholas Hardy began for the first time to realize that his student life, and all its countless associations so dear

to him, had almost ended. The old-fashioned ceremony of the reading, in Latin, from the chapel-pulpit stairs, by the senior tutor, the names of all the young men who were "through," and the delivery of the class oration and poem, took place in the forenoon. The afternoon was the Seniors' farewell festival, when they gathered as "college boys" for the last time. At two o'clock the class, entirely insensible as yet of their dignity as newly "presented" bachelors, began to spread themselves on the grass, under the elms of the old Campus. In the centre of their ring stood a tub of iced lemonade, and every man held in his hand the traditional long white clay pipe, the calumet token of present and everlasting friendship. At the end, placed to front the whole class, stood a table for the speakers, and convenient benches and stand for the class band, who both played instruments and led the singing of the songs.

Crowds of undergraduates lounged outside the ring to listen, and all the front windows of Ionic Hall and old South Central were full of fair maiden faces, — Jane Hardy's and Nellie Lincoln's among the rest.

The "Class History" was the *piece de resistance* of the feast, and for class historian who could equal Matt Calvin? His task was to rake over in running pleasantry each fellow's record, and dismiss him with some witty benediction, and to present "statistics" of the class divisions, with just enough fact in them to make their errors doubly laughable. Every droll division-room blunder, every absurd accident, every joke or rare "load," or ridiculous surprise or funny fix, or excruciating "sell," that had stuck to a man, and had surnamed him perhaps through four years of memory, Matt worked in with his inimitable ingenuity among the victim's "personal facts," and gave him a send-off that

provoked a continual tumult of laughter. Of course Proc — the indomitable Proc — came in for a large share of the comical celebrity. His adventures and mishaps had been manifold, and the exploit of “ponying” himself from the saloon-window was only a single specimen. Matt shaped them all into his “history,” and reeled them off amid peals of deafening mirth. Proc, the good-humored, happy-go-easy fellow, whom nobody could be vexed with, not even the Faculty, seemed to be constitutionally disqualified for study. The effect on his recitations was a rule without an exception, till one day there was a new sensation in his division-room, and a sly cartoon slid about among the shaking students, with him perched on a pyramid of furniture, under the President’s hammer, explaining itself as “the *chair-i-table* raising of Proc’s *stand*,” and bearing a quotation from Byron’s *Lara*, —

“He heard, he rose, and, tremulously brave,
Rushed —”

After fizzling and flunking his way through three years and a half, Proc had made one “rush!” and if it suited Calvin to dramatize that “rush,” and make it the one accident that saved his stand, he liked the joke as well as anybody. He was not sensitive about his scholarship, and he could not help furnishing fun, and making people happy, if he tried.

A perfect tempest of cheers, and calls, and roaring ha-ha’s greeted the conclusion of his “biography,” and the screams of “Speech! speech!” “Speech from Proc!” would have lifted any other man to his feet and put him on the table. But Proc only sat still and laughed with the rest. He never made speeches, and his classmates knew it. He was a man of action; and he continued to be one in after years — a good and noble one.

It was expected that the historian in his hits on "present company" would confine himself entirely to the jocose, and say nothing that would sting; and in the rare art of doing this Calvin's skill and delicacy were perfect; and, though Proc did not respond, many of the class came up to the call, after Matt had "done" them, and indorsed his queer account with pleasantries as happy as his own. But of the *dropped* members (who on presentation-day "turned up missing") he could speak with less constraint; and over some of these the sport was immense. Every grotesque recollection of them,—their freaks, foibles, oddities, and scrapes, and the whimsical things they said or did,—everything but their *vices* (for these were not matter for fun) Matt made the most of, in prose or verse, as the humor served, and the convulsive merriment they created, as he told them over, made even the outsiders laugh, who

saw no point to the story at all. There was Hugo Webb, who never could get the Greek quantities, and always went by the name of "Thuck-a-dides"; and Jim Milton, known as "Qui Fit," from his experiment with "*qui fit Mecenas*," one day at recitation, and who left college to go to Rome (Calvin said) and find out "*who made Mecænas*" (the translation by which he had immortalized himself); and there was Pete Newell, famous for his Homeric epithets, who got lost on a "long-shadowing" logarithm, and went off in an "ungodspeakable storm;" and there was Bob Falconer, who fooled away his time in love-making with a soft city damsel ("*par nobile turtle-dove-orum*"),

"till his brain turned stupid

And migrated from common sense to Cupid,"

and who actually married between Junior and Senior year, and came back and kept

still about it, till the Faculty found it out, when —

“ . . . came the last of college that should vex
Poor Romeo's soul. A summons from the Prex ;
A half-hour's homily, such as judges read
To criminals condemned to hang ; a deed
Of dissolution signed, a bow, a doff
Of hats, and Alma Mater swung him off,
Minus excuse, diploma, or dismissal,
To proper matrimonial perdition.”

But my unacquainted reader cannot be supposed to take the force of these descriptions, or feel the aptness of allusions and reminiscences so entirely limited and local. To a stranger the very best jokes of a “class-history” are as unmusical as a stringless fiddle ; and I have reported Calvin's performance only far enough to hint again at the exceptions I mentioned early in the chapter, — the sort of students who compose the small minority of an American college community, and generally leave their class for their class's good.

Only in rare instances does the funny historian tell the *real* reason of a sorry fellow's disappearance, the rule being to charitably cover his going under some unlucky absurdity.

Songs, music, and refreshments interspersed the reading and speaking, and then (after the ceremony of trampling on the pipes) the class marched in procession to salute the President and Professors at their homes or rooms, returned to give three cheers before each of the old college buildings that stood identified with their life and labor there, and passed to Minerva Hall, to plant their class ivy, and sing Hardy's "Ivy Song." Its words are still heard in the old college, at class farewells when retiring Seniors chant to "Auld lang syne," —

" 'Tis holy here! How deep and dear
Resounds the long good-bye!

We ne'er shall shed a sweeter tear,
Nor heave a purer sigh.

.

All, all are past: and soon the last
Will fade from book and brain.

O, give and take, for Memory's sake,
The parting hand again!"

When the ivy rite was finished they formed the "parting ring," and as they passed each by each, shaking mutual hands, Nicholas Hardy was not the only Senior who shed manly tears. This was not absolutely the *last* of student life and joy, for Commencement was yet to come, but as an unbroken class, for college exercises, they would meet no more.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH THE BROKEN SPOON IS FINALLY
MENDED.

Brief time he lingered 'mid those quiet shades,
His quiet shade no longer. Youths and maids
Went laughing by, as wont; the thrilling song
Of undergraduate glee, that oft and long
He'd sung and loved, from other voices rose
Up the old entries; other champions chose
His place upon the furlong; others' toil
Pursued his ended tasks, where fresher oil
Refilled his faded lamp, and younger forms
Came to his quitted chair; and all that warms
And glads the student's heart did round him swim.
In life of later season— not for him. — ANON.

GOING to sea, I fancy," said Calvin,
entering Hardy's room, and finding
him bustling about with his navy shirt on.

“Yes, going to see what I can see. If my eyes don't go to salt water, salt water will come to my eyes. It's like a funeral here since class-day.”

“You're right, Nick,” said Bart Whately, coming in at the moment. “I'm going to Salton Rock myself, to lie off a week.”

“You fellows are melancholy,” laughed Calvin.

“Ah, Matt — Matt's got an attraction here. He don't want to go away,” quoth Whately, turning the laugh on him. Matt *had* an “attraction;” and having finished his studies, he was perfectly at liberty to attend to it. “Finished your commencement piece, Nick?” he said, after vainly inquiring for a “tub of soap” to put his head in.

“Yes, and committed. I'll be back in time for rehearsals,” replied Hardy, cramming some articles of clothing into his valise.

“Come on!” shouted Barkenhead, appear-

ing suddenly at the door in a navy shirt like the one Nick wore. "Faunce says we must get off in an hour, and we'll have to order down that barrel of hard-tack. Say, aren't you going to take the old sea-serpent along? Some Junior'll break in and hook it while you're gone."

"Plague o' the wooden spoon! Take *yours*," muttered Hardy. But he unhung the old relic from the wall, and carefully placed it inside his dressing-case, and, with hasty good-byes to his friends, the next minute he was striding away with Barkenhead in the direction of the college navy boat-house.

Whately and Calvin seldom rowed, but Hardy was fond of the exercise, and his leisure to enjoy it had been far less than he would have liked. He had made an arrangement, on rather short notice, with seven other members of his boat-club, for a trip round the coast and up the Kinnebassit River, to camp

out a few days, and fish, and ramble, and "lie off." He had a little money saved, for his stewardship in the "Eta Pi's," which gave him his board, had lightened his yearly bills by at least a hundred and seventy dollars, and he calculated that the pleasure and freedom of this inexpensive excursion would divert him from the sadness that came with the vanishing college days.

"Trim boat there, and quit fooling! Man your oars!—Peak!" Every blade shot into the air, and stood in the sun in a glistening row—every one but Proc's. Proc, the irrepressible, whose place was "second stroke," had got into some comical tussle with his starboard mate, and in the scramble to raise his oar when the order came, his right sleeve caught in the thowl, and twitched him over with his heels in the air. In another second he was tumbling in the green sea. Poor Snickerby! But no; nobody need undertake

to pity him. He was like a frog in the water, and when he got out, — as he did almost as quickly as he got in, — he minded quite as little about the wet. It was some time, though, before order could be restored, for Proc once back in his seat, every man of the crew went into a roaring spasm, and it seemed as if “stroke” Hardy and “bow” Forrest would laugh away all their strength. Even “Commodore” Faunce, who was not a “good laugher,” shook so that he almost dropped his yoke-lines.

“Peak!” once more. “Ship! Give way!” And with a long pull and a steady pull the crew of the “Thetis” sped down the harbor.

The sun was blistering hot, and soon dried the water out of Proc’s clothes, leaving him covered all over with a hoar crust of salt, and the infinite suggestiveness of his appearance, and the cackling good humor with

which he bore it, made the fellows forget all the toil of rowing. To have Proc along was worth half a dozen spare hands.

They lunched on the boat, and reaching Rivington a little past noon, they rowed three miles up, the Kinnebassit, and camped at Cedar Bluff. It was a lovely resting-place. The farms across the river, with white-sleeved husbandmen at work in the growing corn, and cottage dwellings peeping out between clustering orchards; the distant pastures dotted with feeding flocks and cattle, and musical with the shrill bleat of lambs; the high shores above and below waving with the red cedar, and maple, and beech; and the shining water underneath, just rippled by the rising tide, made a scene that refreshed every eye and soul, and sketched on every memory a picture of peace. In a grove, in a little nook on the low beach under the bluff, the students spread their tent, and

were just in time to discover a beautiful little spring by the river brink, covered at flood tide, and fill their bucket from it before high water came.

Then they stripped their feet, and ran about like country urchins on the grass, grave Faunce planting his sole on a thistle in the course of the fun, and actually begging somebody to say "thunder and lightning" for him. Towards night an honest cow came near, looking astonished, and Ned McFarlane and Charley Durkee, prudently thoughtful of supper, began trying to make a bargain with her for a quart of milk. But her owner's boy, arriving soon after, proved a more willing negotiator, and invited Proc, who stood hungrily holding a saucepan, to "take" what was wanted. Proc set about milking, but the cow turning round, smelt the salt on his clothes, and took such a fancy to him that she began to eat his shirt off; and

finally the boy finished the milking himself, got his money, and went home happy.

Meantime Hardy, Barkenhead, and Tolman had caught a few fish, and Lem Forrest, who was "cook" for the crew, had started a fire and unpacked the coffee fixings; and a toothsome and a hearty supper the fellows made that evening, with the cloth-covered grass for their table, and good appetites for their sauce. At night they hung their big lantern in their tent, and piling their portmanteaus and blankets in a row through the middle, laid their heads on them, four one side and four the other, with their toes towards the tent-pins. Some tried to read, but the moths and June-bugs had found out where they were, and begun to visit them too familiarly for any comfort in literature. Every man was tired, and just drowsy enough to be foolish. Charley Durkee began to hum, "The Girl I left behind Me," and Barkenhead

struck in with "India-rubber Overcoat," to put him out; but Charley kept on. Proc tried "O the Horse-boat;" whereupon Tolman began the "Bold Soldier Boy," and Lem Forrest tuned up "Erin go bragh! Will-bee, well-bee-wack-fa-la." But all of them could not put out Charley Durkee, and there were five melodies (?) going at once — babel enough to scare the crickets, if not the June-bugs. Presently Faunce was seen to get up deliberately, and wipe something off the back of his neck, and that put an end to the singing.

"What's the matter, Faunce?"

"I guess it's a *Xylota ejuncida*." And that seemed to set the example to all the rest. Barkenhead got up *not* very deliberately. In fact he made a flying leap for the tent-door, his long legs swinging like a pair of flails. "Eh! eh! there's a *Stizus uncinatus* on me!" The mob of insects were now in perfect riot

around the lantern, and dropping and shooting in every direction. Hardy cried out that a *Papilio philenor* had hit him in the eye. "Ugh! ugh!" Macfarlane had a *Calandra compressirostra* in his trousers-leg. "Ouch!" There was a *Boletophagus cornutus* buzzing in Tolman's hair! "Ki-yi!" and Proc executed a ground-tumble with a monstrous *Scarabæus tityus* sticking to his ear! About that time it began to occur to the fellows to hang the lantern outside.

"Regular haze, wasn't it?" remarked Hardy, when the hubbub was over. "Zounds!" quoth Barkenhead, "we'd better box up a bushel or two of these bugs, and send them down to the next Sophomore class." And so, laughing, and rubbing themselves, and shaking their blankets, the disturbed campers settled down again. "I'm going to undress," said Faunce, after fifteen minutes' quiet; "it's streaming hot;" and he threw

off most of his clothes, the rest doing the same. They found that they could burn one little bed-lamp, and the night-flyers would not notice it, with the bright lantern hanging outside on the end of the tent-pole. Hardy, who had lost his drowsiness, took out his portfolio, and began to write a letter to Jane and Silas. The rest of the company were soon asleep. He finished his letter, describing the bug "haze," &c., and then, pencil still in hand, mused his college regrets over again—the very thoughts he had come up the Kinnebassit to get away from. He kept on scribbling instead of going to sleep.

"Farewell to the spells that bind us
In the thrall of a thrice-told theme;
Farewell to the days behind us,
That fade like a splendid dream."

"Hullo!"

McFarlane waked up, and Hardy was glad he did.

“There ’ll be a thunder-shower before morning: I feel it in my bones.”

“Let it come,” said Hardy; “we’ll rest the better;” and he put out his light, and lay down. The two talked a while in half-whispers, and then all was still for three or four hours.

When the company next opened their eyes on each other they were outside the tent in the dark, a tousled squad *en dishabille*, holding their clothes in their hands. McFarlane’s “bones” were good prophets. The thunder shower had come, and a tremendous one—and it had *drowned them out*.

“What time is it, I wonder?” mumbled Tolman, rubbing his eyes. Just then, in a pause of the retiring thunder, they heard a distant cock crow. It was three o’clock; and they concluded not to go to bed again.

This will answer for a description of the camping-out life of the crew of the *Thetis*

(bating the bugs and the rain) during all their Kinnebassit trip. They rowed up the river by easy stages as far as Squantuck Highlands, where the rapids stopped them; and there they staid two days. I have no space to relate their adventures, and how they fished, and bathed, and picked wild strawberries, and made droll acquaintances; and how Barkenhead ran a race with a yellow dog, and got back their bag of fat pork that the beast had stolen; and how Proc "floated" on his back in the rapids from top to bottom, wearing an old white hat, and bobbing up and down like an empty keg. Every night, after the first, their sleep was sound and sweet; every day the weather was inviting for out-door pastime. On Sunday they all—save one detailed of necessity to watch the boat and tent—attended the little Squantuck church, a sun-burnt but gentlemanly seven; and when they returned down the river

there was not one of them but carried more strength in his sinews, and more happiness in his heart.

On the eighth day, as they passed Hilbury, and rounded the bend just below, they came suddenly upon two men drawing a shad-net. Hilbury was the most beautiful town on the river, and was so much admired for its romantic situation that city people often made it a summer resort. At this time a few, it appeared, had already arrived, for our excursionists met a small party returning from a morning boat-ride. At the place where the men were fishing the river shallowed and widened between lovely meadows, and here, as the students floated down the current, and the Hilbury party moved up stream nearer the bank, both boats came within the sweep of the long net, and could not escape before the ends were hauled ashore. The queer catch made good fun for the men, and quite

as good for the captured crews. "Biggest haul we ever made," remarked one of the fishers dryly, as the boats huddled close to the bank, and the seine came combing through the shallows full of struggling, silver-sided shad and white-fish; and then there was a great laugh all round.

There were four of the Hilbury party, two young men, and two young ladies. But what was Hardy's surprise to recognize one of the latter as Margaret Granger! Her surprise was equal to his, when she knew him in his boating uniform, and with his sunburnt face. It soon appeared that Margaret was no longer Miss Granger, but a young bride, for she presented her "husband," a fine-looking gentleman, who proved to be "Mr. Wilson, junior partner with Mr. Mulford in Colebridge City." The two parties in the boats were introduced and placed on talking terms at once, for the oddity of their meeting made mutual ac-

quaintance easy; but "Mrs. Wilson" had something more to tell Hardy, as soon as the stir and sport of landing the fish had subsided a little. "*Mrs. Hanford* is stopping up here at the hotel," said she. "She intends to start for New Harbor to-morrow, to see you. It is fortunate that we met, for she would have been disappointed. Shall I carry her a message from you, or will you call?"

"I will call," Hardy said at once. He would not pass so near his early and best-loved school-teacher without seeing her.

"Jump in here, and go up with us," said Mr. Wilson heartily. "Room enough in the stern-sheets;" and the invitation was seconded by the whole Hilbury party.

"Thank you, but not in this dress," said Hardy. But his objection was overruled with outcries from both the boats. The uniform was "just the thing;" a college-navy man who pulled a stroke oar might be "proud of his

rig" anywhere; and some of his classmates made jocose remarks about the privilege of a "handsome man," &c., till, to end it all, Hardy got aboard with his new acquaintances, and started up the river. "Back to-night," he said, as he left his crew.

"Camp at Redstone," shouted Faunce.

"Yes, I know."

And the Hilbury boat disappeared round the bend, while the Thetis, after taking in a supply of fresh shad, pursued its way down the stream. In some further conversation with Margaret, Hardy learned that Mr. Hanford's grandfather, the singular, deaf old man of whom he had such uncomfortable recollection, had recently died. But that Mrs. Hanford had any particular purpose in seeing him, other than to make a friendly visit, he did not begin to guess till Margaret mentioned that "aunty" had made a journey to Colebridge shortly before the old man's death,

and had some time before written him a letter — perhaps *two* letters. Then he thought of Miss Tabitha Magraw's friendship for himself, the mystery of her manner lately, hinting at some discovery of her own, and her cautious promise touching "inquiries" whose result she seemed to be awaiting.

But his interview with Mrs. Hanford revealed the meaning of everything, and cleared up all the puzzles of the last three years. She was looking worn, and he could readily account for it when she hinted what a fearful care it had been to wait on "Grandpa Tudor" during his last days. It was the end of a troubled life, and there seemed to be so much to settle and put right, and it was so hard to answer his questions and make him hear. After the first greetings, and talk of health, and weather, &c., were over, she asked him if he had received her "letter." Hardy certainly had not. "Then it is in the

office at New Harbor for you," she said. "I wrote it ten days ago, the week after Grandpa Tudor died. But I can tell you the contents." And then she astonished the young man by informing him that the strange old cynic had left him two thousand dollars in his will, and a small, curiously carved, oaken box, which he had always kept near his bed and seemed to guard with jealous solicitude. From that she went on to give his history as far as she knew it, and such explanations as she could, including much that she had learned from Miss Tabitha during that lady's visit to Colebridge. Old Rodney Tudor had inherited considerable wealth, which, without following any particular business, he had kept invested, and continually accumulating. He had outlived his wife and his only child, who died a widow, the mother of Mr. Hanford and Mrs. Mulford; and for the last twenty years he had been a solitary among

his friends, his infirmity of hearing growing upon him, and his sharp, suspicious temper making him every year more dreaded and more disagreeable. His only employment had been to watch his wealth, but no one but himself could tell how much he had, or where it was, nor would he ever talk of his relations or descent, though a large store of family facts must have been in his possession. It was only known that his father's name had been Gartney, a nephew of Hiram Gartney who left the "old will," and nearly of his age, and that, according to Miss Tabitha's information, this man, Rodney's father, had been concerned with Hiram in the "legal plundering" of certain property from their relatives the Magraws, and afterwards disappeared and changed his name. Rodney Tudor had returned to the State after his father's death, and though in no sense guilty of any wrong his father might have done,

his bearing had always been that of a man who inherits an uncomfortable secret, or riches doubtfully acquired.

Aged people who had known him spoke of "noble traits" in the singular and silent man, and even of generous deeds that he had done, and in his dealings he had always been strictly just, but it was evident that his property was more of a trouble than a comfort to him; and though, until his anxieties and infirmities of age disfigured him, his personal appearance inspired respect, nobody loved him.

"Lone, wild, and strange, he stood, alike exempt
From all affection, and from all contempt."

Since Nicholas' visit to Colebridge he had asked a great many questions about him, and Mrs. Hanford had told him much, and Mr. Mulford had related to him the story of the saving of the infant's life in Fen-

wick River. Nicholas had less need to wonder (Mrs. Hanford said) at being remembered among his bequests than several others had, who never claimed relationship, and perhaps had never even heard of him.

His whole care and thought during his last days seemed to be to make amends for some old injustice, and his final distribution of his property was as eccentric as his life had been. Of course the family at home had been liberally provided for, but his bequests to Miss Magraw, the Hardys, Lymans, and others, intimated his wish to restore, as far as possible, the thousands obtained by his father, to those who would have inherited it if no wrong had ever been done.

It was plain enough now to Nicholas where the five hundred dollar check came from, though until this moment he would have

thought himself whimsical in the extreme to connect it in any way with the deaf old man's inquiry as to how he expected to "get money to pay for his education." He mentioned the gift to Mrs. Hanford.

"Ah," she said, "I have no doubt that latterly he was bestowing money in just that way. We noticed that his letters to his New York banker were more frequent than he could have needed to write upon ordinary business."

And now all the interest centred on that mysterious casket, the old carved oak box. Mrs. Hanford had the key in sacred keeping, to carry out the donor's charge that no hands but Hardy's should open it; and when she gave it to him he declared that she should share its secret with him. He opened the box, and found it nearly filled with ancient papers, carefully arranged in files. These were mostly mortgages and

title-deeds of land, some of them dating back more than a hundred years; but a few were less ancient, and contained records, minutes, and genealogical notes and history, evidently written by Rodney Tudor himself. They did not spend time examining the papers, however, for an article at the bottom of the box soon absorbed all Hardy's attention, and his friends seemed to become as much interested in the discovery as himself.

There lay the handle of the ancestral spoon. Nicholas seized it, and quickly unrolled the white paper that wrapped it round. On the paper he read the words, recently written, and in the tremulous hand of fourscore,—

“To Nicholas Hardy, the one man living of his race (as I believe) in whose heart and veins beat the true spirit and blood of old Solomon Hardee, of Commodore Hardy the gallant friend of Nelson, and of Col. Jeremiah Hardie the Revolutionary patriot, I restore

this relic of an ancient heirloom, once a treasure of value and a token of fortune to his kindred, and kept unbroken through three generations as a sacred souvenir.

“RODNEY TUDOR.”

Here, then, was the rifled treasure at last, the silent witness of the Gartney wrong. Old Rodney's father, with his share of the Magraw plunder, had stolen it away. There could be but one meaning to this. The old “diamond” legend was truth, and the truth had been, till a little more than a century ago, a family secret and a family veneration. A renegade of the race had violated it at last. No wonder he changed his name. It was only strange that he had not destroyed this memento of his guilt. Perhaps it was compunction. Perhaps a superstitious fear came upon him after he had robbed the old talisman of its riches. Perhaps it was the forgetfulness of crime's own folly. These thoughts rushed swiftly through young

Hardy's brain before he could decide to actually search and see if there was any sign that the old handle had ever held a diamond at all. He was almost ashamed to, for Mrs. Hanford had never heard anything about it. He turned the venerable stick over and over in his hand. It was somewhat plainer than the one his fancy had modelled for his friend Barkenhead, but still it was a beautiful piece of carving, and some of the old silver ornamental work remained upon it, and he was pleased to trace in its shape something of the serpentine pattern that he had conceived, as Cuvier could conceive a whole animal from one of its bones.

"Is it possible that the old gentleman knew I had the *bowl* of this old spoon?" he questioned half to himself.

"I think he must have learned it from Miss Magraw," said Mrs. Hanford, smiling. "She

was obliged to speak very loud, and the family could not help overhearing some words of the conversation in his room while she was there. I can answer for her that she talked of you as a mother would, and she seemed to have a singular influence over him. She wanted none of his money for *herself*, I think."

Hardy continued to examine the old handle, instinctively searching for a screw-joint. If there was one it was most ingeniously concealed. At last the bulb near the lower end yielded a little to a strong twist that he brought to bear upon it. Was it possible? A little further strain upon the wood started the bulb apart with half a turn. Could there be such a strange coincidence? It must have been a dream, a premonition, that inspired his guess! The joint *was there*, and by the time he had opened it, he half expected to see the

diamond itself. There was the round hollow where it *had* been; a good-sized stone that must have been worth \$2,500. Old Rodney Tudor had given him just the value of the stolen gem!

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Hardy rode to Redstone with Mr. Wilson and his wife and Mrs. Hanford, and at the close of a lovely afternoon hailed his classmates once more in their little camp.

“You’ll see me at Commencement, and my husband too,” said Mrs. Hanford. “I am away for a rest, and I shall not return home till I have seen and heard my little mischievous Nick Hardy ‘speak in public on the stage.’”

And then the pleasure-party all bade good-bye, and rode back to Hilbury.

“Come here, Bark,” said Hardy, a few minutes afterwards, taking Barkenhead aside.

He had taken the old spoon-bowl from his dressing-case, and joined it to its long-lost stem. The ragged ends of the break fitted perfectly.

“Mighty Jackson! Where did you get that?”

Hardy made all the explanation it was proper to make, and the two talked, and handled, and fussed over the curious old relic till Forrest finished frying the shad, and called the crew to supper.

On the next day but one the *Thetis* was back in its place in the navy boat-house; and very soon after his return to college Hardy went to No. 209 Savin Street, carrying the recovered heirloom with him. With all that Miss Tabitha's energy had discovered, she had not found out that old Rodney Tudor had the missing stem in his possession. The papers which the secret panel in the old cabinet disclosed were

ancient inventories of personal property belonging to her family, and among the items was counted "The Diamond Spoon;" and she was able to determine the time this precious relic was rifled, and to trace the theft to Hiram Gartney's nephew, Rodney's father. Her use of this information had, doubtless, quickened the old man's sensibilities, and hastened his purpose of restitution; but the broken stem that had held the stolen diamond remained his secret till he died.

Probably no other graduate had a larger "personal attendance" at Commencement than Mr. Nicholas Hardy. Not only his "old school-ma'am," Mrs. Hanford, was there, with her husband, but actually his father and mother, and Sue, and Abe, and Phœbe, and Annette, and Sally and Jerry, and their husbands and wives (if they had them), rose

up with one accord, and came to New Harbor to hear Nick "speak his piece."

To most of them the journey was the great effort of their lives. There had never been such a sensation in the Hardy family since the great Fenwick River flood. Of course Silas and Jane were already on the ground; and they and Nicholas provided for their relatives handsomely.

Saul Hardy and his wife had got over their craze about the grand "inheritance." The marked improvement during the last few years in their mental, moral, and social, and even *financial* condition was due (and they knew it and honestly owned it) solely to one cause, their pride in their educated son. In this improvement all their less educated children shared. It was wonderful to see how the influence of Nicholas' superior course and character had (in the rustic phrase) "smarted up" the whole family, and

given them higher tastes and ambitions, and a better appearance, better habits, and better homes. Their regard for him had led them to a true respect for themselves, for it developed in them a healthy shame to appear unworthy of him. In this benefit, once begun, Jane, of course, had aided not a little, and Silas' return and "resurrection" (as he always persisted in calling it) had given a new impulse to the general hope and gain.

And so, having brought our friend Nicholas and his relatives together in "grand tableau," I must dismiss Commencement with a line, or my chapter will never be done. He delivered a fine oration on "Self-culture and School-culture," and received from the President on a piece of parchment his degree of A. B., which in itself made him no better or worse.

The old papers in the Tudor box were put into Squire Gammel's hands, and were found to contain evidence proving the claims of the Hardy family in the Gartney will. But even after its provisions were ascertained and settled, the trouble of realizing the property was so great that the bequests were practically worthless. Nicholas, and all his relatives, had learned how to support themselves without waiting for dead men's money, and having learned this they were prepared to receive thankfully any needed assistance that came in an honorable way. Miss Tabitha Magraw, being left alone after the marriage of her niece, purchased land on the Crampton Meadows, and sent for Nicholas' youngest sister, Sally, and her husband, to come and live with her. The young man was thrifty and careful, and soon made his new farm near the city the admiration of the neighborhood for beauty and productiveness.

Silas continued to work for Mr. Lego, winning golden opinions for his steadiness, fidelity, and skill.

What became of Jane, Mr. Matthew Calvin will be happy to tell you any time you choose to call at his office in the city of New York.

The members of the family still in Fenwick Falls were all prospering at last accounts, though the general testimony is that Annette has "made out" a little better than the rest.

And as for Nicholas himself, of course all are glad to know that he was so far provided for financially that he could go back to New Harbor and spend three years in the University Law School.

For particulars of his life and career afterwards I refer you to Miss Nellie Lincoln (she that was) to the records of the State Legislature, and to the clerk of the Superior Court now sitting in Colebridge.

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